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WELCOME

ISSUE 632 MARCH 2024

I don't know where the old adage comes from that the top 20 per cent of anglers catch 80 per cent of the fish. It does, however, seem to be widely accepted as a fact by most anglers. What is it that the elite top 20 per cent are doing, or not doing, while 80 per cent of mortals scratch around sharing out the remaining 20 per cent? In this month's issue Roger Munro attempts to answer this question, but only after discovering that amongst the anglers he surveyed the belief was actually that the top ten per cent of anglers catch 90 per cent of the fish. Turn to page six to discover more about the secrets of the 'ten per cent club' and the qualities and mindset needed to become one of the fish catching elite.

With spring not far away, now is the time many of us will start thinking about a fishing holiday break somewhere around the coast of the UK. Whether you are a camper or motorhome owner we've selected a range of angling gear, gadgets and camping accessories to make your next overnight fishing adventure as comfortable and successful as possible. Check out our selection of travel rods, rod holders, fridges, cool boxes and more starting on page 12.

It was an overnight trip to the Scottish Highlands which saw Ryan Thompson and his mates from The Northern Tide Riders battling 100lb-plus common skate from the shore of a sea loch. Scottish skate fishing presents the ultimate challenge for a UK shore angler. Throw in a howling storm and breathtaking scenery and it quickly becomes a weekend fishing trip away that will live long in the memory of all those involved. You can read the full story starting on page 20.

NEW SERIES

This month Dave Lewis starts a new series of features telling the untold tales of his angling exploits over the course of a lifetime in angling. He begins this month with a story set in the 1990s and a challenge to be the first person to catch and tag bass in all the countries of Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland in a calendar year. Find out how the (much!) younger Dave got on by turning to page 44 where he takes up the story.

We like to bring you something a bit different whenever we can and this month Ben Bassett goes on an offshore LRF species hunting mission from Weymouth with skipper of Flamer IV Colin Penny. The target is the diminutive butterfly blenny but, amongst other species, gurnard, wrasse and the stunning red bandfish all put in an appearance – many caught on small lures and jigs. With some magnificent photography from the day it's a great read and offers a new angle by combining charter fishing and Light Rock Fishing techniques.

THE END OF AN ERA

After more than 50 years writing for Sea Angler John Holden has made the decision to retire. John is considered by many to be a legend of the UK beachcasting scene (see Living Legends on page 90). His contributions to Sea Angler and clear, eloquent, writing style have helped generations of sea anglers improve their skills and casting technique. His knowledge and advice to readers on rods, reels and tackle choice stretches to nearly half a century, and he is one of the original contributors from the first days of Sea Angler in the early 1970s. John's honesty and integrity, particularly in reviewing new tackle, has won him legions of admirers and a great deal of respect and we are sure readers will miss his wise words greatly. Enjoy your retirement, John, and on behalf of readers and everyone who has worked on Sea Angler, thank you.

Until next month
David

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GIANTS FROM THE SHORE
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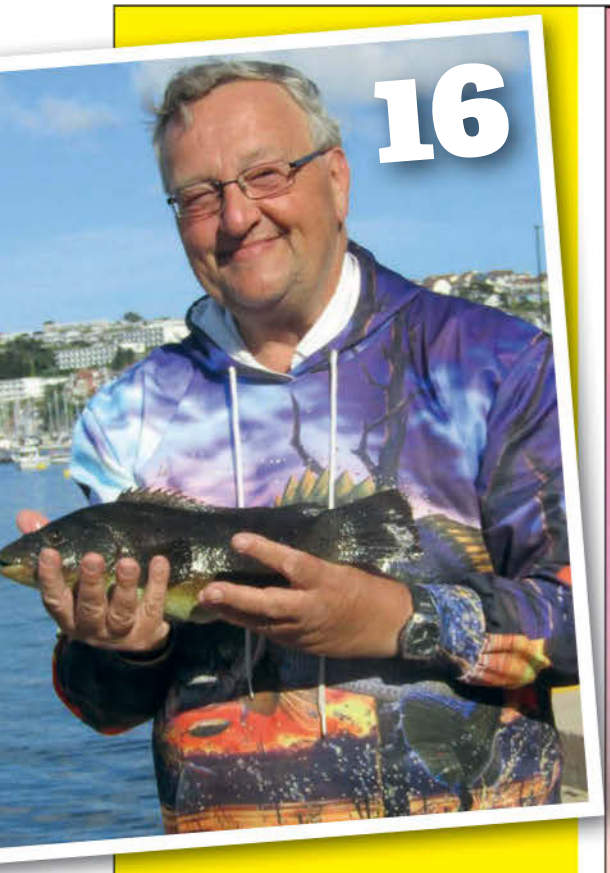

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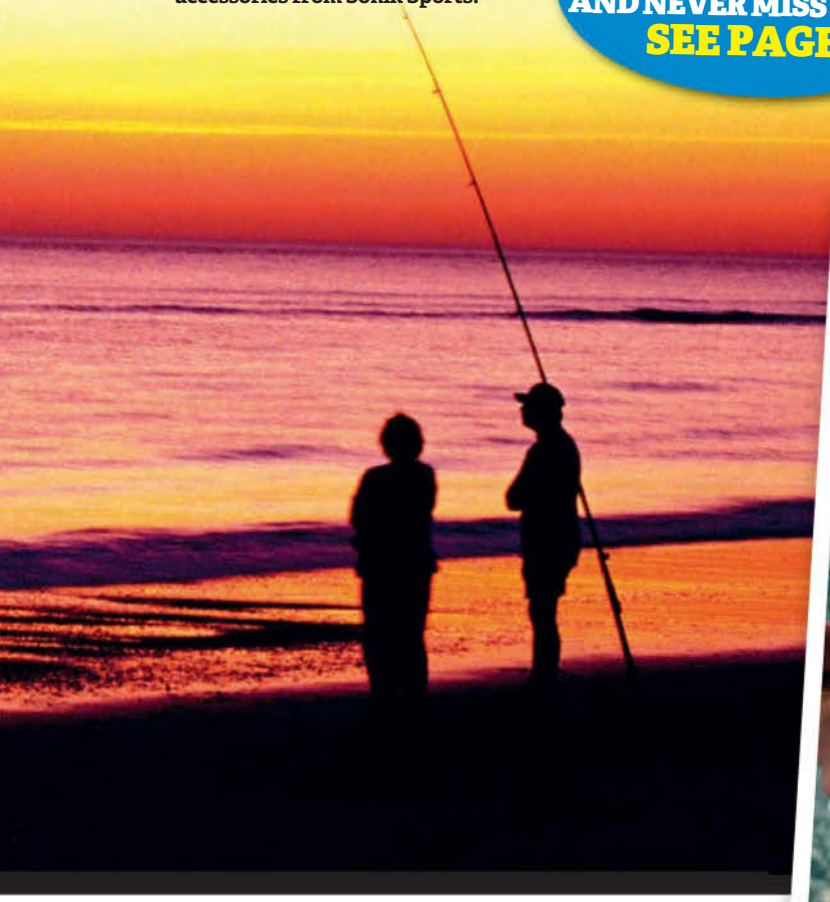
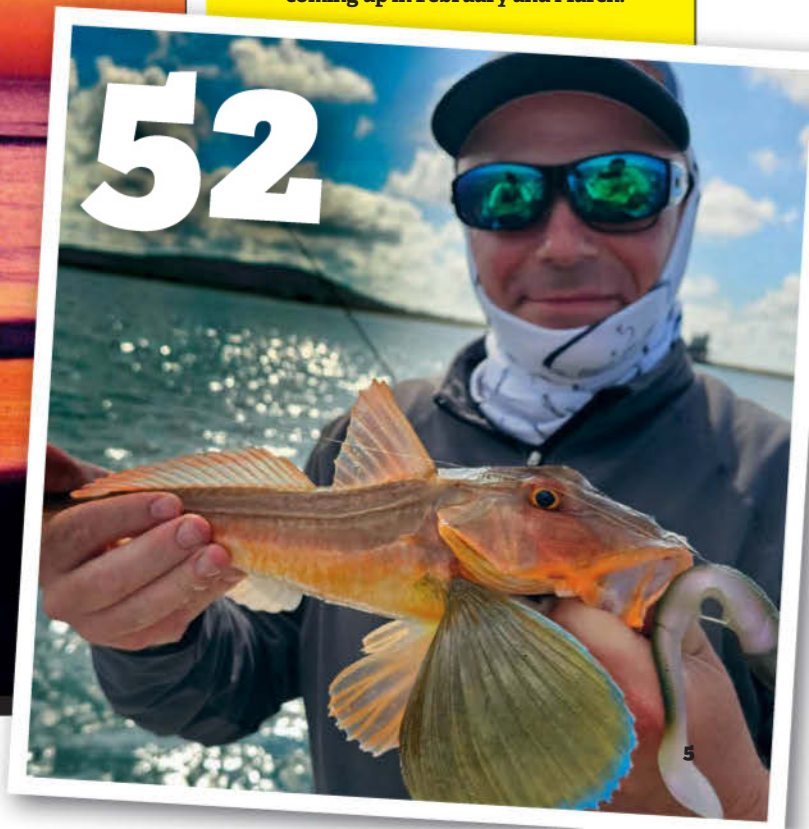




Words and pictures
DR ROGER MUNRO

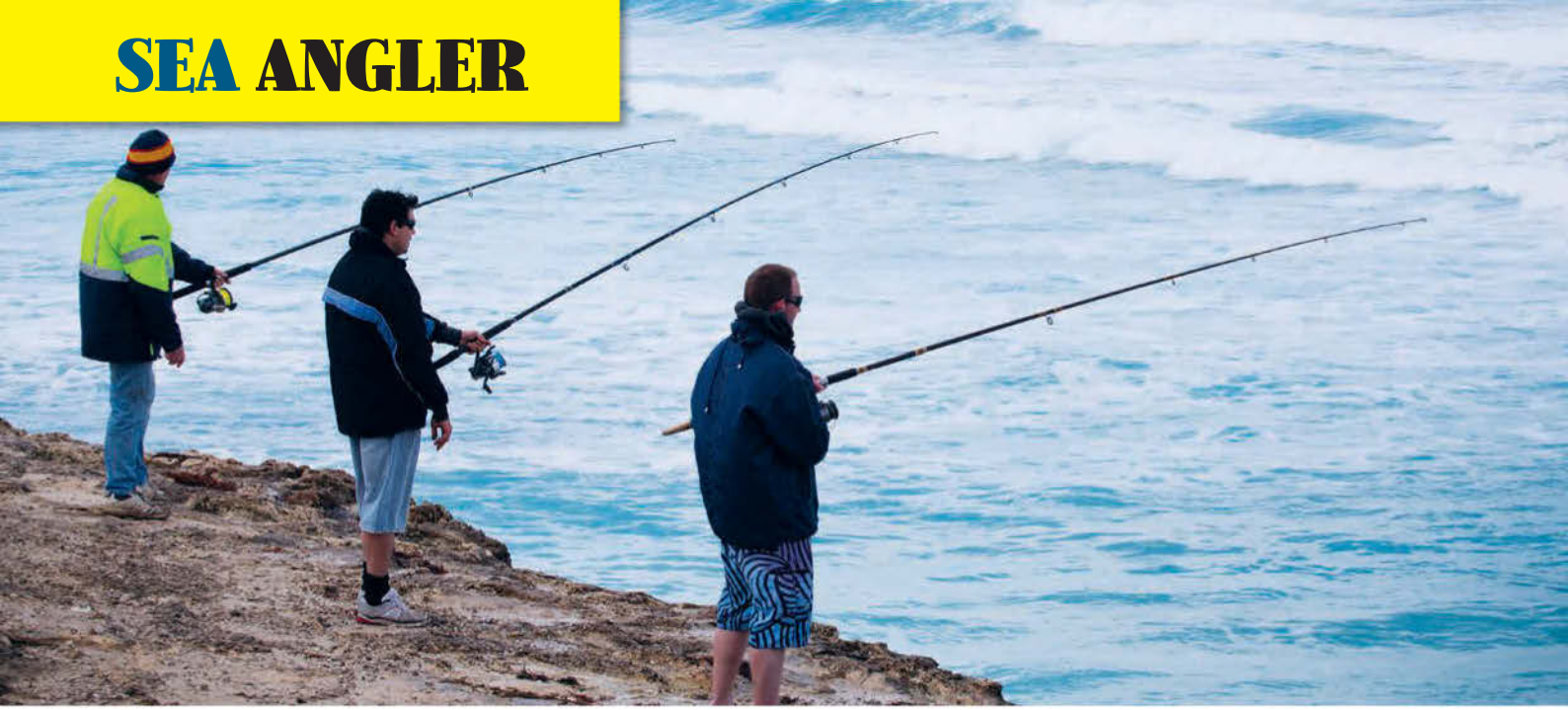
HOW TO JOIN THE 10% CLUB

The old saying goes that the top 20 per cent of anglers catch 80 per cent of the fish. Roger Munro looks at why this is, if there's any truth to it, and what you need to do to become one of the fish catching elite

Do you fish with a golden hook? Ancient Roman emperor Augustus compared taking large risks with the chance of small gains to fishing with a golden hook: the risk of losing the hook was greater than the reward of any fish caught. Does your negativity contribute to your failure to succeed in capturing your fish of a lifetime? If so then you are in the minority of anglers.

When asked whether they are always confident about catching fish ahead of their intended session, 79 per cent of 128 anglers confirmed that they always are. 12 per cent said that they are on most occasions. Five per cent stated that they are confident some of the time and just four per cent said that they are never confident of catching anything. This finding of overwhelming positivity is not surprising since we anglers are, by nature, an optimistic breed. If we weren't, we would never leave the house!

Herein lies a bit of a paradox. These same anglers were asked whether they believed in the 80:20 principle which implies that 80 per cent of fish are caught by 20 per cent per cent of anglers. This follows the broad rule of the Pareto principle that for any given activity, 80 per cent of output is generated by 20 per cent of participants. The majority of those questioned (78 per cent) not only believe that this is true but many believe that this phenomenon is even more pronounced in that 90 per cent of fish are caught by 10 per cent of anglers.



"They have extraordinary self-belief. This is a fundamental difference between average and outstanding fishermen who appear to be a special breed"

When the 78 per cent majority were asked what was the single most important quality or factor they believed an outstanding angler possessed, their responses were as follows:

- Dedication/enthusiasm (22 per cent)
- Experience (13 per cent)
- Instinctive ability to read the water and being in tune with nature (11 per cent)
- Intelligence (9 per cent)
- Determination / perseverance (11 per cent)
- Don't know (11 per cent)
- Luck/coincidence (10 per cent)
- Preparation (9 per cent)
- Ability to cast a long way (2 per cent)
- Possessing good quality tackle (2 per cent)

This ready recognition and creditable acceptance by most anglers that the majority of fish are caught by a minority of their fellow fishermen is testament to their optimistic ambition to join the esteemed 10 per cent club. But how can this be achieved – what is it about members of the 10 per cent club that sets them apart?

- It's their psychology that puts them at the head of the queue. They exude a quiet, unassuming confidence. They have an unshakeable belief that they have ticked all the appropriate boxes and are content to wait, and wait! They have the ability to stay calm, do not get flustered, and show great patience when things go wrong.
- They are very accomplished at "thinking outside the box". Being innovative, adventurous anglers they push their limits by trying new venues, new techniques and new baits. In doing so, they become increasingly better anglers by forcing themselves out of their comfort zone. They are very good at creating rational, singular approaches to catching fish. Although they are open to new ideas, they can still maintain a sharp focus on one thing if needed.
- They are effective at dealing with failure, they persevere through unsuccessful times and obstinately never accept that nature has had the better of them. They have extraordinary self-belief. This is a fundamental difference between average and outstanding fishermen who appear to be a special breed. They have little regard for the admiration and compliments of other anglers.
- Crucially, they never become bored with their own success.
- They don't get dismayed by a blank day since they ardently believe that it takes them a step nearer a successful one.
- Not for them is it better to fish hopefully than to catch a fish but quite the reverse – they don't hope to catch their quarry but even without any conscious reasoning they instinctively know that they will succeed.
- They can be ruthless, deadly and unrelenting and will do whatever is necessary to secure their catch, even at the expense of others albeit not deliberately nor knowingly. They have a "leave no stone unturned" policy.
- These days, the average human has an attention span of just eight seconds, which is four seconds lower on average than it was in the year 2000. This is attributed to advancing technology and the ability to get immediate answers. But fishing is a sport that requires all of our attention and can be all consuming. This is where members of the 10 per cent club excel – they constantly channel all of their energy into trying to get into the minds of a fish – to think like a fish (albeit that it sounds ridiculous to us mere mortals).
- Whether anglers know it or not, successful fishing is all about problem-solving. Whereas most anglers spend their time worrying about the physical aspects, the highly successful ones recognise that it's a true test of mentality agility.
- They never let distractions overtake them. Instead, they have the discipline to force themselves to keep at it. Every successful angler has experienced failure - multiple times, and in multiple ways. What separates them from the rest isn't that they fail less, it's that they persist more. They will not accept inferiority in any form.
- They avoid the herd mentality, preferring some space, peace and quiet. They tend to find their own spots that hold fish, they seem to instinctively know where the fish are and are mentally prepared to seek out places independently to catch fish.
- Although angling is a results-oriented business, there are rarely silver bullet solutions but highly successful anglers keep searching for them and are very effective at finding them. This may not seem fair but it's what angling is all about.

TIPS ON HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE 10 PER CENT ANGLING ELITE

1 Your success as an angler is tied directly into your mind-set and mental habits. How you think and feel about your approach to fishing critically impacts your ability to catch fish.

2 It helps to care a lot about what you're doing. Passion can be energising and it can help drive you through the disheartening, blank days. But passion can't be faked. You have to truly feel that what you are doing is worthwhile – you must yearn to land the fish of a lifetime every time you go fishing.

3 You must believe that success will follow, but don't become desperate as the hours tick by. The brittleness of your desire will push those big fish ever further away – a phenomenon well recognised by members of the 10 per cent club.

4 The one thing we should all cultivate is a positive mental attitude. Although we can't just turn it on or off – after all we are what we are, but there are ways we can transform ourselves. Crucially it's all about not accepting inferiority. Following a blank day you will never hear members of the 10 per cent club saying "It's what I'm like and there's nothing I can do about it". We anglers have easy opportunities to lose self-esteem, but we must overcome these drawbacks by adopting optimism and a belief in ourselves. Without this, the outstanding anglers who have achieved the most might have achieved nothing.

5 Careful planning is fundamental to successful angling. Don't just target "whatever is biting". When many anglers are asked what they are fishing for, one of the most popular answers is, "Whatever is biting." This response comes from anglers who have too casual an attitude and invariably accompanies empty catches. If you don't have a clear plan of your target species, where that species is found seasonally and what the optimal presentation is to catch them, you are blindly shooting an arrow at a target. Not only are you likely to badly miss the bull's-eye but the entire target as well.

6 Creative solutions are often required to solve problems (generally, that of not getting a bite). Be adaptive in experimenting with new approaches until you can catch fish rather than giving up and quitting. Hoping that something will take your bait is not good enough – you must really want it and have no doubt that it will surely happen.

7 Perseverance is absolutely essential. It's not enough for you to tolerate and endure adverse circumstances, for example you need to transcend conditions such as uncomfortably cold weather and discipline yourself not to feel the cold.

8 The motivations that attract millions to the sport of fishing are indeed mysterious but the need to satisfy a primitive instinct coupled with the excitement of the pursuit must surely be significant constituents. We have all felt the thrill of a fish expending every bit of its energy in trying to break free – this is the very core of angling. We must keep this driving fervour at the forefront of our thoughts when we go fishing because it can provide a strong impetus in our ambitions to succeed.

9 Take the opportunity of sharing a fishing session with someone you believe belongs to the 10 per cent club. Take note of all the tactics, methodology and techniques they use, follow their example and employ what you learn in your future sessions. Every small detail could be crucial to your catch rate.

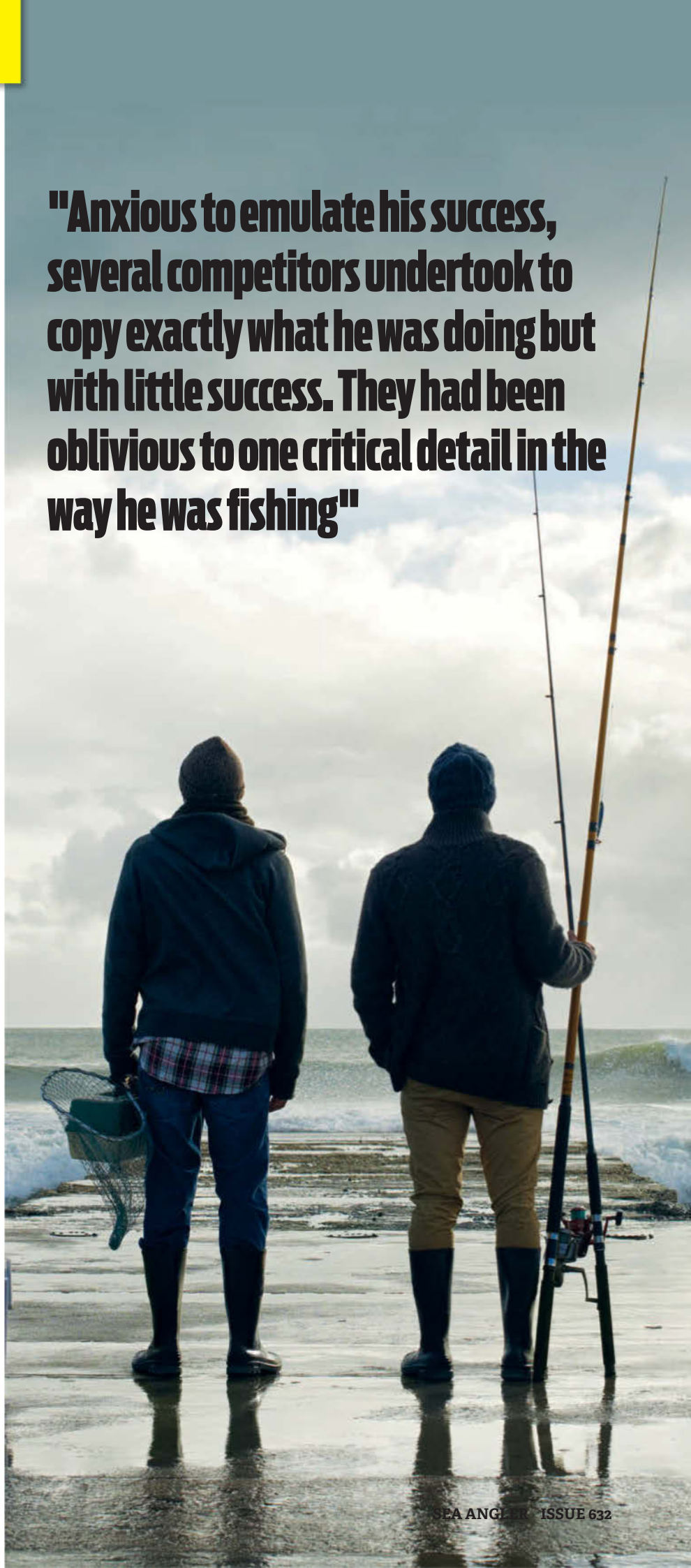
I recall fishing a flounder competition surrounded by a number of fellow competitors who mostly failed to catch any fish. However, I was fishing next to one exceptional angler who constantly held the rod and brought in two to three flounder every time he retrieved his ragworm-baited three-hook paternoster rig. Anxious to emulate his success, several competitors undertook to copy exactly what he was doing but with little success. They had been oblivious to one critical detail in the way he was fishing. He wound in his trace at such a slow rate that the others had failed to notice what he was doing. He later told me that he felt the flounder unfailingly take the bait every single time he painstakingly retrieved his line.

Similarly, I once belonged to a very popular sea angling club which had one particular member who was widely regarded and respected as an outstanding angler. He had an aura of quiet confidence about him. He unfailingly won every club competition, always caught fish even if the rest of us completely blanked. Every year, he took almost every annual trophy the club had to offer including the best specimen, most species and heaviest bag of the year.

On one occasion I had a long conversation with this unassuming, modest, fellow angler during which I asked him whether he had some sense of why he was so much better at catching fish than the rest of us. He genuinely hadn't recognised that his catch-rate was a class apart but he did offer the following thought-provoking response – "There are members of this club who are far more experienced than I am, some have tackle, rods and reels which are much more expensive than mine, they go fishing more often than I do, my casting range is only average and I don't take much notice of the weather forecast. But I believe that there is one thing I am considerably more passionate about than they appear to be and I believe it is the key to catching fish. The most critical, crucial and pivotal link between any angler and their quarry is the bait they use. I therefore make sure that my bait is perfect every time I cast. Not only does it all have to be as fresh as possible but it has to be unfailingly fresh – "possibility" is not something I will accept but "certainty" is. It has to be 100 per cent effective and its presentation on the hook has always got to be perfect. I have noticed that I change my bait much more often than most of our fellow club members do. If I don't have absolute confidence in my bait, I simply don't go fishing. What is the point in having a gold chain if the central link is missing?"

Is this the mystical key to the 10 per cent club? Who knows, but it has a certain irrefutable logic about it. The full answer is probably much more complex. Perhaps real success is not about matching the results of those you aspire to emulate but lies in understanding and accepting who you are as an angler. You may be perfectly happy with being a member of the 90 per cent club and have no aspirations to be one of the 10 per cent elite. Remember that fishing is a perpetual series of occasions for hope so look up at the stars and not down at your feet. You see, it really is all in your head! ■

"Anxious to emulate his success, several competitors undertook to copy exactly what he was doing but with little success. They had been oblivious to one critical detail in the way he was fishing"



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PE2320	30 RHW	495yds/80lb	~~£244.99~~	£89.99

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CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
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RE0853	M
RE0854	L
RE0855	XL
RE0856	2XL
RE0857	3XL
RE0858	4XL

BEST SELLER

Daiwa Sealine Slosh Multipliers

The SL20SH and SL30SH are two top drawer performers boasting powerful, high speed gearing. Nicknamed 'Slosh' by their many fans around UK coastlines, they are excellent for all shore work, uptiding and a variety of down tide boat fishing.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
DW0631	SL20SH	250m/20lbs	~~£135.00~~	£100.00
DW0633	SL30SH	300m/20lbs	~~£135.00~~	£100.00

SONIK SKS Black Surf Reel

The Sonik SKS8000 Surf reel is a full-sized surf reel which has been designed to meet the requirements of the UK beach angler. The spool design gives smooth long casts and the large handle helps to speed gear and fish back to the beach.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
SO0481	8000	220yds/20lb	~~£49.99~~	£39.99

Shakespeare SALT 20 Multipliers

The Shakespeare SALT Multiplier reels are ideal for novice anglers or fishermen on a tight budget seeking for a ready-to-fish reel. Comes pre-loaded with mono.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	PRICE
SP4546	RHW	548m/0.36mm	£47.99
SP4547	LHW	548m/0.36mm	£47.99

Mitchell Bluewater R Reels

SALE

Perfect for newcomers to the sport, youngsters or even anglers who are looking for a quality spare surf fishing reel. The Mitchell Blue Water R Reel offers fantastic quality and performance at an excellent price point.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
PU5522	8000	370m/0.40mm	~~£29.99~~	£20.00
PU5521	9000	290m/0.40mm	~~£29.99~~	£20.00

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CODE	SIZE
SV9635	M
SV9636	L
SV9637	XL
SV9638	2XL

ALL SIZES
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£89.99

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ALL SIZES
RRP: £29.99
£19.99

CODE	SIZE
RE0511	7
RE0512	8
RE0513	9
RE0515	10/10.5
RE0516	11
RE0517	12

BEACHCASTER & SURF RODS

Best Selling Century Rods

CODE	MODEL	LEN	CASTS	PRICE
CN0181	Graphex Match Beach	13ft 6	125-175g	£555
CN0182	Graphex Supermatch LD Beachcaster	13ft	50-150g	£535
CN0183	Graphex Ultralite ST Beachcaster	13ft	50-125g	£510
CN0394	Fireblade Surf	13ft	4-6oz	£275
CN0180	Tip Tornado Beach	13ft 6	4-7oz	£560
CN0179	Tip Tornado Graphex Sport Beach	13ft 11	4-8oz	£600
CN0078	Kompressor SS Beachcaster	13ft 10	4-7oz	£499

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO SEE OUR HUGE STOCK OF CENTURY RODS, INCLUDING BASS, BOAT & SPINNING RODS!

PENN Tidal Surfcasting Rods

BEST SELLER

Tidal stands for everything you need for surfcasting: Super strong but lightweight and responsive 30T carbon blanks that are designed to have the best distance properties.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
PE2301	14ft	50-200g	3	~~£119.99~~	£110.00
PE2302	14ft	100-225g	3	~~£139.99~~	£130.00
PE2303	14ft	100-250g	3	~~£139.99~~	£130.00
PE2304	14ft	100-300g	3	~~£139.99~~	£130.00

Daiwa D Wave Surf Rods

Designed and made by Daiwa these outstanding quality and performance delivers way above the price point. The best starter or combo rod you could possibly ask for.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
DW8121	12ft	4-8oz	3	~~£69.99~~	£55.00
DW8122	13ft	4-8oz	3	~~£72.99~~	£60.00

IMAX PackDown Tripod

A full 6ft beach tripod which telescopes down to half the size for ease of transportation. This design also allows for low beach quiver work by keeping the front legs short and extending the rear legs or for making a stable set up on rocks by adjusting each leg to suit.

SV17772
RRP: £59.99
£40

Mitchell Suprema 3.0 Surf & Beach Rods

SALE

The ultra light-weight and slim blank have a fast parabolic action that is combined with a very sensitive tip.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
PU10110	13ft 9	100g	3	~~£154.99~~	£80.00
PU10111	13ft 9	130g	3	~~£159.99~~	£85.00
PU10113	13ft 9	250g	3	~~£174.99~~	£95.00
PU10114	14ft 9	30-110g	3+3	~~£154.99~~	£80.00
PU10115	14ft 9	40-130g	3+3	~~£174.99~~	£95.00

Ironcast Guerilla Beachcaster Rods

A well priced continental rod that packs a punch at a price everybody can afford. Ideally suited to fishing clean beaches when targeting species such as flounder, whiting, plaice and dogfish.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	PRICE
TX7658	13ft 6	150-225g	2	~~£93.99~~	£92.99
TX7656	13ft 7	100-200g	3	~~£93.99~~	£91.99
TX7657	14ft 7	100-200g	3	~~£98.99~~	£97.99

BASS & SPINNING RODS

Ironcast Banzai Series Rods

The BZ4 is a light beach or estuary continental style rod while the BZ5 is an excellent all-rounder continental rod.

CODE	MODEL	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
TX9030	BZ4	14ft 9	3-5oz	3	~~£144.99~~	£100.00
TX9031	BZ5	13ft 9	4-6oz	3	~~£144.99~~	£100.00
TX9032	BZ5	14ft 9	4-6oz	3	~~£149.99~~	£100.00

BOAT RODS

PENN Squadron II Boat Rods

This series features a more modern sporting blank with an action designed to achieve high performance in both fishing and casting. Suitable for both spinning and bottom fishing, guldes are braid friendly.

CODE	MODEL	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
PE1821	Boat	7ft	20-30lb	2	~~£69.99~~	£60
PE1823	Braid	8ft 3	20-30lb	1+1	~~£79.99~~	£60

FISHEAGLE Saracen Beachcaster Rods

FULL CARBON

- Designed to offer unbeatable value for money, ideal for the occasional angler or beginner.
- Suitable for general beach fishing but also capable of fishing in mixed ground and from offshore structures.

CODE	LENGTH	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
RE0549	12ft	4-8oz	3	~~£69.99~~	£49.99
RE0550	13ft	4-8oz	3	~~£79.99~~	£54.99
RE0551	14ft	4-8oz	3	~~£84.99~~	£59.99

PENN Overseas XT Series

Includes all the different types of rods that a travelling angler can dream off.

CODE	MODEL	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
PE2122	Trolling	7ft	30lb	4	~~£299.99~~	£130
PE2126	Boat	7ft	30-40lb	5	~~£189.99~~	£95
PE2127	Boat	7ft	40-50lb	5	~~£199.99~~	£100
PE2128	Inshore	8ft	15-40g	5	~~£199.99~~	£99

Shakespeare Catch More Fish Spin Kit

The Catch More Fish 2 Spin Kit is ideal for beginners and offers great value for money. The kit includes a 9ft rod with a pre-spooled reel and a tackle box full of terminal items to get you started.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	PRICE
SP4151	9ft	40-80g	2	~~£54.99~~	£40.00

Abu Garcia Max X Bass and Shore Spinning Combo

SALE

The MAX X is a light, modern, strong and reliable spinning combo. It's the ideal choice for the starting angler who is looking for decent quality!
Comes with a 10ft Max X Rod and Max X 40 Reel.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	PRICE
PU11135	10ft	15-40g	2	~~£129.99~~	£60.00

PENN Squadron II Surf Rod

Offering exceptional value for money, the PENN Squadron II series features modern sporting blanks actions designed to achieve high performance in both fishing an casting.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
PE1809	12ft	113-170g	2	~~£99.99~~	£70.00

Savage Gear SGS2 Offshore Sea Bass Rods

Become a master of catching sea bass offshore with this extensive collection of rods designed specifically to do just that, by casting or vertically. Despite being excellent for targeting offshore sea bass, they are also perfect for catching other salty predators.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
SV23958	7ft	5-18g	2	~~£99.99~~	£40.00
SV23959	7ft	7-28g	2	~~£99.99~~	£40.00
SV23960	7ft	15-45g	2	~~£99.99~~	£40.00

Savage Gear SGS6 Long Casting Rod

Cast huge distances with incredible precision no matter what the conditions.

- Fuji stainless steel SiC K guides
- Fuji reel seat
- Delicate yet powerful blanks

SALE

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
SV23912	9ft 6	Fast 10-35g	2	~~£309.99~~	£99.99

Shakespeare Agility 2 Boat Salt Rod Series

SALE

These rods feature lightweight, fast actioned, yet powerful blanks designed to maximise bite detection.

CODE	MODEL	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
SP3940	Boat	7ft	20lb	2	~~£51.99~~	£40.00
SP3941	Boat	7ft	30lb	2	~~£51.99~~	£40.00
SP3945	Boat	7ft	20-30lb	4	~~£76.99~~	£35.00
SP3944	Braid	8ft	20-30lb	2	~~£66.99~~	£40.00

THE SEA ANGLER GUIDE TO THE BEST CAMPING KIT FOR FISHING

Whether you are pitching a tent for the weekend or taking your motorhome on holiday check out Sea Angler's selection of the best angling accessories for your next fishing adventure!

With the days getting longer and spring around the corner now's the time many anglers start planning some well earned fishing breaks. For many of us that means chucking the tent in the car or getting the caravan ready for the first trip of the year. But what other peices of kit, gear or gadgets do you need that will help make your trip memorable for all the right reasons? From fishing rods and cool boxes to camping chairs and portable cookware, here are some of our top picks of accessories for anglers for you to cast your eyes over.

TECHSON 2 PACK CAR FISHING ROD HOLDER

If you aren't taking a travel rod the Techson rod holders are the next best thing and a gamechanger when it comes to travelling with long sections of rods in a vehicle. Making use of the space available the rod holders hang lengthways along the roof of the vehicle where they won't get in the way or get damaged. No more snapped rod tips, broken rod rings or uncomfortable passengers! The nylon straps simply clip through the grab handles above the front and the back seats using a snap buckle. Up to four rods can be stored out of the way using the nylon hook and loops to secure them in transit. The straps are adjustable and can be fitted to almost all makes of vehicle and take just a few minutes to fit.

- **RRP: £12.89**
- **www.amazon.co.uk**

VAC-RAC ROD HOLDERS

VAC-RAC rod holders are designed to carry rods short distances on the outside of the vehicle using vacuum or magnetic holders to secure your rods in transit. Travel to the USA and you will see them being used a lot. The Standard RAC uses the original "T" Bar vacuum rod rack. Being non magnetic it fits all vehicles: aluminium, steel or plastic. The standard RAC holds up to four rods using soft suction bases with pillar mounted support for reel clearance. Wrap round cords ensure rods are firmly held. The T recess allows for easy shock cord unclipping

- **RRP: £72.99**
- **www.johnnorris.co.uk**

HELINOX SUNSET CHAIR

Described as the world's most comfortable camping furniture Helinox's Sunset Chair is a best seller. Sitting high off the ground, making it easy to get in and out of, its high-back design adds increased neck and shoulder support. It comes with a headrest flap for soft cushions for more head support. It has a collapsible frame that packs into a zip case weighing just 1.6kg and can hold up to 145kg (that's nearly 23st) – perfect for fishing in comfort on a pier, on the beach or relaxing back at camp after your session with a nice cold beer!

- **RRP: £150**
- **www.helinox.co.uk**

YETI RAMBLER

Made from durable stainless steel and boasting double-wall vacuum insulation, the Yeti rambler is puncture and rust resistant while being great for keeping your hot drinks hot, and your cold drinks cold. Coming in three sizes (10-30oz) and a range of colours, they are completely personalisable to your needs. For long fishing excursions and sharing hot drinks, pair your Rambler with their Stackable Mugs to keep you hydrated and caffeinated in style.

- Rambler RRP: £20-£35
- Stackable mugs RRP: £30-£35
- uk.yeti.com

NOMADIQ BBQ

Fish supper, anyone? Once you've done your fishing and are back at camp at the end of the day, the NomadiQ BBQ is the ideal gas BBQ to cook your catch on. Dishwasher safe and portable, this compact, foldable, aluminium BBQ won't take up valuable space in the boot of the car. It comes complete with everything you need. Each side of the BBQ can be adjusted separately, making it ideal for grilling at different temperatures. The nomadiQ BBQ comes complete with gas hose, pressure distributor, drip trays, shoulder strap and manual. It has two separate temperature zones and is easy to clean after use.

- RRP: £240
- www.nomadiqbbq.com

OUTWELL ECOCOOL ELECTRIC COOL BOX

As well as camping fridges, there will also be a range of cool boxes available at the show, such as the Outwell ECOcool 35L Electric Cool Box. With two cooling modes, Max or Eco, the Outwell ECOcool coolbox is great for situations where you want to conserve your power. This cooler is incredibly versatile and it can even double up as a heater, allowing you to keep food warm. With cooling temperatures to 18-25˚C below ambient and warming temperatures to 50-60˚C, this cool box is suited to all your fishing day trip needs.

- RRP: £159.95
- www.jacksonsleisure.com

ALPICOOL ADVENTURER COMPRESSOR CAMPING FRIDGE

The Alpicool Adventurer Compressor Camping Fridge is a compact fridge solution for campervan and camping use. Efficient and quiet, the compressor offers two running modes dependent on your needs. It also has a clear LED display and removable dividers inside the chamber to keep your bait, fish, drinks and meals fresh and chilled.

FEATURES:

- Provides either 22 or 35 litre fridge storage
- Coolbox style fridge with digital temperature control panel
- Clear LED display
- Fully insulated body with removable divider
- 12/24V
- Door latch
- Mounting plate for added security during transit

- RRP: £239.95
- www.jacksonsleisure.com

ANKER POWERCORE PORTABLE CHARGER

With 26800mAh of power the Anker Powercore charges most phones over six times, tablets at least two times and any other USB device multiple times. Three USB output ports equipped with Anker's PowerIQ and VoltageBoost technology ensure high-speed charging for three devices simultaneously. Dual Micro USB (20W) input offers recharge speeds up to twice as fast as standard power banks – a full recharge takes just over six hours while using both input ports.

- RRP: £39.99
- www.amazon.co.uk

LIFEVENTURE SOAP LEAVES

Ideal for travelling or outdoor sports, these soap leaves from Lifeventure allow to you to keep yourself clean and fresh without having access to a tap. Containing 50 biodegradable leaves, this soap is perfect for cleaning your hands after a fishing session while camping. Simply use a small amount of water from a cup or bottle to create a lather using a leaf of soap and rinse off.

- RRP: £5
- Go Outdoors

SHAKESPEARE SALT XT BEACH EXPEDITION

The Shakespeare SALT XT Beach Expedition rod is an exceptionally good multi-piece beachcasting rod that is made with the best carbon to make the rods incredible strong and still lightweight. Due to the use of spigot joints and the high-quality carbon, the action of the rod has not been adversely affected. Next to that, the rod comes with special saltwater proof K-type guides to make sure that the line cannot get tangled around the guide, preventing knots or breakages. As well, reduced transport length will help the travelling angler but will also allow you to store the rod in the car.

- **Five sections**
- **High grade carbon blank**
- **Multi-piece rod action with incredible action**
- **24T carbon fibre**
- **Special SW Proof K-type guides**
- **Cordura hardcase travel tube**
- **Lightweight and responsive blank**
- **Sensitive tip for perfect bite registration**
- **X-shrink wrap handle for extra grip**
- **High quality DPS reel seat**

- **RRP: £139.99**
- **www.fishingmegastore.com**

PENN SQUADRON III TRAVEL SW SPIN

If lure fishing is on the cards while you are away then the PENN Squadron III Travel SW Spin series feature modern blank action designs combined with an attractive finish. The 24T carbon blanks are lightweight and have the perfect actions for working lures in any inshore and nearshore application. Due to the multi-piece design of these rods, they will fit inside your suitcase and are therefore perfect for the travelling angler. The slim and fast action blanks are finished with saltwater proof guides and combined with high-density ergonomically shaped EVA handles, these rods are built to last.

FEATURES:

- **High Modulus 24T carbon blanks**
- **Saltwater proof components**
- **Available in 8ft, 9ft and 10ft**
- **Breaks down to four or five-pieces**
- **Casting lure weight options 15-150g**

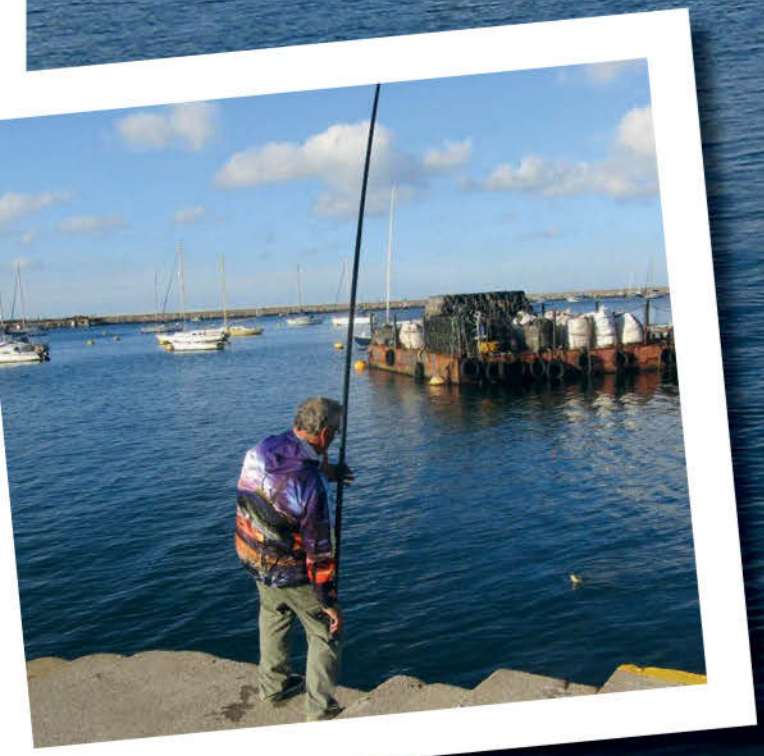
- **RRP: From £84.99**
- **penn-fishing.co.uk**

The Caravan, Camping & Motorhome Show takes place at the Birmingham NEC from 13-18 February (at the same time as BoatLife – why not visit them both?). For more information visit ccmshow.co.uk.

Words and Photography by LINDSEY GREEN

POLE POSITION

Pole fishing in the sea might seem like a coarse fishing tactic adopted for saltwater, but its history as a sea angling technique is ancient, as Lindsey Green explains



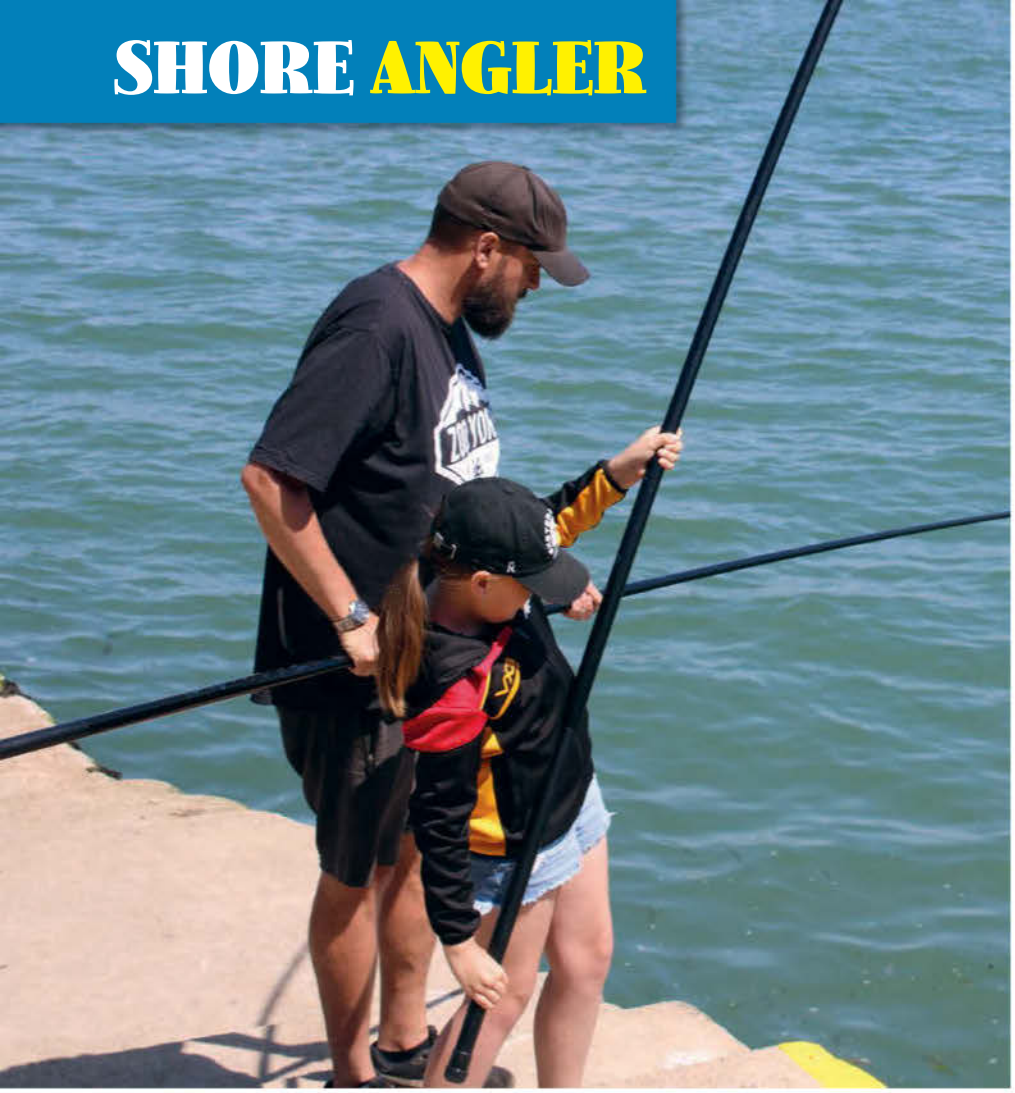
"Well, that's something new," declared a voice from above. Looking up, I saw an elderly gentleman standing on the edge of the harbour wall. "I have never seen anyone pole fishing in the sea before." I smiled and we chatted for a few minutes but, as we did, I mulled over his opening words. While his second statement was undoubtedly accurate, his first was very far from the truth.

My own adventures with a pole had started over 30 years previously, but this was merely a drop in the ocean compared to the five and a half thousand years that people have been pole fishing in the sea. Stone inscriptions on Egyptian walls showed people fishing with primitive poles around 3,500 BC, while Greek and Roman mosaics from 2,000 BC showed the exact same thing. Still later, the Greek poet Oppian of Corycus, who between AD 177 and AD 180 wrote the Halieutika, a series of five books on fishing in the sea, wrote about people using bronze hooks and a well-twisted line of horsehair fastened to long reeds. In short: a rudimentary pole.

As a young man, I had seen a photograph of people lining Devonport Docks at the beginning of the twentieth century, each one armed with a bamboo pole. Most of these had been rescued from a local shop that used them as the cores around which it wrapped the carpets that it sold. Apparently, using them afterwards for fishing was common practice with a silk or horsehair string attached to one point on the pole and basic float tackle on the other. I have also seen photographs from Ireland in the 1950s, where the practice was still going on then. Even today, in the Maldives, there is a whole industry of sustainable tuna fishing with busy crews using sturdy wooden poles, a far cry from the lightweight, very cheap – you can pick them up for under £20 – carbon fibre poles that I use, which can make for some seriously exciting fishing.

ADVANTAGES OF POLES

When I first started using poles in the sea I was looking for a simple way to introduce my young children to the sport that I had loved all my life. I had chatted to people that used them in fresh water – where coaches invariably reach for whip poles whenever they encounter a newcomer – and I became convinced that this was something that the children could not only do but that they would also catch enough fish to enjoy the experience. It also had distinct advantages. It targeted species close in, like wrasse, but it also enabled the use of much lighter floats, where bites became easier to spot. It could also be fished with pinpoint precision for long periods, something much more difficult for a rod to achieve.



First, I had to adapt the poles to make them contend with saltwater. This was easy enough. Starting with a six metre, reasonably robust 'whip', I removed the tiny end eye, which was useless for the sea, and replaced it with a six-inch piece of stainless-steel spring wire, 1.25mm thick – you can get it from eBay – which I had folded in half. This became a much stronger eye and gave a sound attachment to the pole when I whipped it in place and finished it off with a resin coating.

We use whips because an elasticated pole gives species like wrasse too much of an opportunity to reach cover – I know, I have tried – but a small piece of elastic is still necessary. You need enough to cushion the fight but still keep them away from the weeds if you can (it is by no means certain). I tried several grades but found that an eight to 10 inch piece of 14 – 16 elastic (hollow core is good) with a snap link on one end and either a pole connector or a swivel on the other is best. This will do the job just fine although you still have to treat the pole with respect. If you do become snagged in the weeds, ship the pole until you can reach the elastic and then grab hold of the swivel. Gently pull backwards until the tackle is free. Do not, on any account, use the pole like a crane. This is finesse fishing for maximum fun and, just like LRF rods, it will not contend with the pressure.

Most of the time, we use very light float tackle with 5g weights. Bites on these are easy to spot and the subsequent fight very exciting. Small, shallow dips indicate that smaller species like corkwing wrasse, goldsinnies, young ballan wrasse and rock cooks have taken an interest in your bait while slower, deeper dives indicate that bigger ballans are around. In all cases, hit hard, hit quickly and aim the pole high to get the fish moving away from the bottom. Long handled landing nets will also be necessary.

The subsequent fight is electric. Depending on where you are, wrasse will run for the nearest cover while species like bass will just run. A big wrasse will put a bend in the pole that will see your arm muscles shaking against the pull that they can exert. The elastic will provide the cushioning that you need but the wrasse's first attempt to reach cover will put considerable strain on both tackle and angler. Once he is off the bottom, he will still run but the outcome of the fight is decided in those first few seconds.

WHIP TACTICS

When we fish, we use simple float tackle. Mainline is 12 - 15lb breaking strain monofilament and the length of the top five sections of the pole while the trace is eight pounds breaking strain fluorocarbon and six inches shorter than the bottom section of the pole. The hook depends upon the bait used where we use long shank size 4 Aberdeens or, my personal favourite, live prawns, for which we use size 2 B900C Kamasan hooks. Prawns will almost always raise the size of the fish caught and will occasionally bring in some surprises, like bass or the occasional topknot. Ragworms will almost always catch a number of mini species and, while they do get some bigger fish, these will be in the minority.

I get the floats from Amazon - THKFISH slide bobbers taking 5g of weight – while everything else can be picked up in local tackle shops. As for depth, the use of a plummet is

essential to gauge it correctly since you want the bait to be between six inches and a foot off the bottom. This is where the biggest wrasse will be.

Talking about the bottom, this proved a bit of a surprise for me. Considering how easily the wrasse normally find cover, I had supposed that the bottom was awash with waving strands of kelp and oarweed. However, when I treated myself to a submersible drone, I thought that I would send it down and try to get some photographs and footage of what the seabed actually looked like at one of my favourite marks. The water is normally too deep to get an idea when you are fishing so I thought that this might be quite interesting.

The drone, a Chasing Gladius Mini, was carefully lowered into the water and sped on its way. However, instead of what I was expecting to find, the ground next to the spot where we normally fish was quite barren. Some weeds, yes, but far less than I thought that I would see. There was, however, a pile of scallop shells which suggested that the fish were regularly fed by a diver cleaning his or her catch. This is something that I will definitely investigate using scallop frills as bait just to see what might happen.

I had an anxious moment when some seals appeared and began circling the drone – it was like something out of Jaws – but when I surfaced it, they did not like the sound of the motors and left for pastures new.

In the last couple of months I have introduced several club members from Baywater Anglers, a club in Torbay, to the use of the pole. To say this has gone down well is an understatement. We have had some good sessions, especially when we were using prawns and this has really opened their eyes to the possibilities of pole fishing. Now several are quite happy to jump at the chance of a trip, especially when I have got some prawns. It may be very different but it is cheap, great fun and an excellent way of introducing children to the sport. It also catches a lot of fish – we have had 16 species so far – and I think that there are far more possibilities to explore. We shall see, but I have a good feeling about it, not least of which is the conservation angle with no fish suffering from being left on the hook or reeled in vast distances. Saltwater pole fishing is a new take on an old method. I suggest you give it a go – you may be surprised just how much you enjoy it. ■

BoatLife

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Words and photography by RYAN THOMPSON

A DATE WITH A SKATE

Few UK fishing experiences can compare with battling a common skate, let alone catching one from the shore. Ryan Thompson and mates headed to the lochs of the Scottish Highlands in search of the thrill of catching these monsters of the deep

Thursday had arrived and with storm Debi brewing up, a few parts around the Scottish islands were showing signs the storm would arrive slightly later than anticipated. With tides being nigh on perfect a window had opened up on the weather front. This meant one thing: a chance to skip up to the heart of the Highlands in search of the elusive common skate.

A quick pit stop on the way to load up on frozen bait and we were ready to take on our quest for the long weekend ahead of us. Mark from Alreet Rigs & Baits always supplies us at short notice on all our trips away with the best bait we can get up here in the north-east. We punched the postcode into the Satnav and we were off with no time to spare; the music was blaring and the time was flying. Banter of the last few trips was the topic of conversation for most of the trip, reminiscing of past catches and, of course, the stories of previous skate caught and the ones that got away. The scenery never disappoints, regardless of the time of year. Whether it be summer or winter the backdrops of mountains in the distance, with carpets of trees surrounding them, always puts a smile on our faces. With little snow showing on the mountains (which is unusual for this time of year) the trees and fields were still boasting the autumn colours all around us. The winding roads unveil breath-taking vistas at every turn: rolling hills, cascading waterfalls and vibrant flora that paint the landscape with vivid colours. As you venture deeper into this natural wonderland, you can almost feel the mystical connection between the land and its inhabitants.

We arrived around 10pm, just in time for the best part of the ebb tide. Being eager to get our rods out the gear was unravelled from the camper van and we quickly headed for the mark. A 30-minute walk and a clamber over jagged rocks was in order to get to the fishing grounds.

Upon arrival the weather was perfect: a slight wind but nothing that would stop us fishing. The trusty Shimano Saragossa 14000sw reels were mounted onto all of our rods. Very long pulley rigs were removed from our rig wallets and baited with small joey mackerel and octopus cocktail baits. It wasn't long before we thrashed our baits into the deep water in front. Between the four of us the choice of rods were the new Century Fireblade range, from the 14ft fully carbon to the 13ft and 14ft GT, and the famous Eliminator T900. The reason for the softer rods was that we found using these actually helped during long periods of time battling specimen fish; the glass absorbs a lot of pressure for the angler, resulting in more comfort during battle. In addition to fishing deep lochs the key to mending line is with a softer tip which allows the grip lead weight to sink its wires more easily into the seabed leaving a nice arc on the tip allowing direct contact from the tip to the hook.

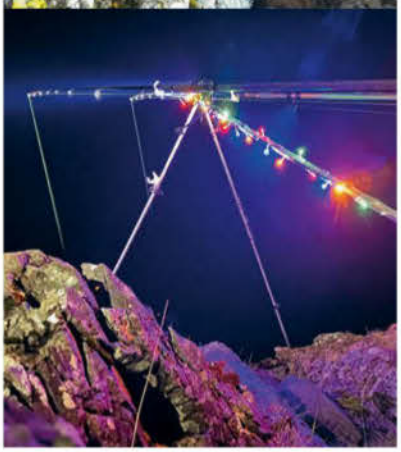
“We sat in silence, the sound of the hilltop sheep knocking small rocks from the top had us a little on edge before the familiar sound of a ratchet screaming off jolted us into action”

TIP TORNADO GRAPHEX

The 3rd generation of TIP TORNADO GRAPHEX rods captures the best of the past and brings new and defined benefits in manufacturing and material technology.

The advanced Graphex technology benefits the rods performance; improving durability, distance, tracking, sensitivity, dampening recovery to neutral and delivering noticeable weight saving.

SPORT SUPER MATCH MATCH SUPER MATCH LD ULTRALITE ST



The question was: would the GT be up for the challenge?

An hour or two had sailed by with only small bites showing on the glass tips. It looked like the dreaded dogfish had arrived in numbers, but as quickly as they moved in, they disappeared.

It was as if a light switch had been turned off – normally a tell-tale sign of bigger predators moving in. All headlamps were switched off and an eery feeling enveloped us as the fog descended from the tops of the cliffs. We sat in silence, the sound of the hilltop sheep knocking small rocks from the top had us a little on edge before the familiar sound of a ratchet screaming off jolted us into action. All headlamps were turned on to find my Fireblade GT was pulled right over with line peeling off – skate on!

BATTLE TIME

With the softest rod of the range we knew we were in for a battle. Perching myself nicely I began to gain control of the situation. However, 20 minutes later and the fish decided to run off again, this time heading for the seabed, resulting in a stale mate. With as much pressure as possible I managed to get the barn door moving again and up into the column of the water. After playing the fish for a good 50 minutes the glass tip was helping to absorb most of the tension and stress on me. After what seemed a lifetime of punishment, I had the upper hand again; this time there was no stopping me. 15 minutes later an angry male skate appeared from the depths. Still with some fight in him he dived one last time. I was ready, taming him in a cool manner. Working as a team we steered him ashore along the rugged shoreline safely to the landing platform, relieved and buzzing with excitement. He measured 80in by 60in putting him at 133lb on the chart.

Stuart was in disbelief: this was his first skate seen in the flesh. We all just laughed

and smiled at him while taking photos of the prehistoric creature. The grunting noise it makes is shockingly loud but after we removed all the parasites (leeches) from its back it was time to send him back down to the deeps. Timing the swell right the fish was soon back in the water and gave us a small showboat before flapping away for its next meal.

RAREST OF RAYS

After all the excitement refreshments and a quick bite to eat were needed. We'd only just finished a nice hot brew when Danny's rod decided to take a small lunge causing the ratchet to go off. It wasn't a full-on skate run; however, something aggressive had taken his bait. Picking up his GT rod he clearly knew something on the other end wasn't happy. He leaned into it slowly and started to cautiously pump and wind it in. A small fish but fighting aggressively – what could it be?

We turned our headlamps on and before we knew it a ray was spiralling up towards the surface. Allan and I looked at each other and knew exactly what species of ray it was. Both shouting "take your time", Danny slowly brought the fish up from the drop and managed to land a rare catch: a cuckoo ray. What looks very cute is, in fact, a very aggressive ray. It flicked its tail as if it was a mini stingray. The markings on its back were nothing short of stunning.

LOST THE POT

Time was getting on; the wind kept off but the rain decided to start. Allan and Danny were done but Stuart was eager to catch his first common after witnessing his first one caught. He decided to fire out all three rods for one last cast, eagerly watching over the

"The noise of rain bouncing off the Bigaloo couldn't dampen the sound of the Saragossa as the first fish of the night started stripping line off the reel"

rods. It wasn't long before that beautiful clicking of the ratchet sounded out into the darkness and once again it was fish on! The T900 screamed off and it was clear he was into a skate. This was it; Mr Harding's first real taste of a battle with a true giant from the deeps. This fish seemed to be a lot bigger than the last one and, guessing it could be a big female, Stuart settled in the rock face and sat comfortably using the glass tip to gain a few inches per pump. Unfortunately, after an hour of fighting, the fish got hung up and after trying everything it was still stuck solid. The fish was swimming out each time but being retrieved to the same snag. The only thing it could be was a lost crabbing pot and rope on the seabed as there are no snags on this mark. Gut wrenchingly, he lost the fish but was still absolutely ecstatic to even experience the sheer power of the fish. Sunrise wasn't far off and it was time to retreat back to the camper van for some much needed sleep. With the wind direction changing we needed to work out another plan as the swell was due to pick up causing this mark to be unfishable.

DAY TWO

After a good kip the smell of a freshly brewed coffee is always welcome. With a hot caffeine injection inside us we began to go over last night's fishing. With Storm Debi arriving it was time to work out a new plan. The further north we travelled the better the weather would get. After checking tides we settled for a mark near Loch Aline pier. Driving towards the loch red deer bolted across the roads. The Highlands are home to an array of wildlife, including the majestic wild stags. This proud creature, a symbol of the untamed wilderness, adds another layer of enchantment to the fishing experience. Autumn brings with it the rutting season, where the echoing sounds of stags clashing in dominance fills the air, adding an almost primal background soundtrack to the experience. The sight of these animals in their natural habitat, combined with the sounds of their powerful roars, is something to experience. As we moved towards the dirt track down to the mark they all headed over the hills into the thick fog. We decided to meet up here with a few local lads from down our way, Scott Brown and Paul Wile. Scott had just pulled in a nice double figure thornback ray as we arrived. We set up on the mark just as the sun was going down over the mountains in front of us.

The weather turned brutal with howling winds and torrential rain; however, this didn't dampen our spirits at all. We were glad to move: if we had stayed on the first mark it would of been dangerous and stupid. The noise of rain bouncing off the Bigaloo couldn't dampen the sound of the Saragossa as the first fish of the night started stripping line off the reel. All headlamps turned towards the rod with the bite on, which, as it happened, was mine again. The fish couldn't resist the cocktail of mackerel and octopus. I started to pump the fish in and, surprisingly, it was coming in a lot more easily than my last one. However, 40yds out they seemed to be a small ledge which the beast managed to get itself stuck on. I waited with the rod in the tripod and pressure on, waiting for the fish to swim out while I was being battered from the typical Scottish weather. The rod tip lifted and without a second to spare I picked it up. The fish was free of the snag and battle continued until the skate finally gave in. Danny was on hand to land him safely to the shore. At 96lb on the chart this one wasn't as big as the one the day before. Yet despite this I was overjoyed that another behemoth had been landed and safely returned again to the shallows.

The team persisted for a few more hours with fresh baits being sent out into the shallows but with nothing in return. Time was ticking on and the rain didn't stop. With heavily drenched clothing and equipment we all slowly made a beeline for the vans for a well-deserved brew and change into some dry clothes. Still buzzing we chatted into the early hours. An early morning rise was on the cards as we needed to make our way home to miss the Sunday morning traffic. Before we set off, though, the diary was out on the dashboard with dates being pencilled in for our return adventure.

This trip was a thrilling adventure filled with highs and lows, challenges and triumphs. The experience of venturing into the Scottish Highlands in pursuit of these elusive creatures was a testament to the passion and perseverance of dedicated anglers. The thrill of hearing the ratchet scream off, the battle with these behemoths and the sense of satisfaction upon landing a skate created memories that will last a lifetime. ■

For more adventures from Ryan and his pals check out their YouTube channel - The Northern Tide Riders. Scan the QR code opposite

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Words and Photography by MIKE THRUSSELL

MARCH 2024

MIKE THRUSSELL PICKS OUT THE BEST TIDES AND TOP TACTICS FOR TARGETING EARLY SPRING PLAICE AND ESTUARY BASS

BOAT PLAICE

March triggers the start of the boat plaice season. This prized flattie might still be a bit thin after spawning, but their numbers and condition build fast and good numbers can be caught.

TIDE TALK

Offshore plaice like a tide with some flow, but not too much. The tides to pick are ideally the rising tides between 6th and 8th of March, even better the tides 19th to the 24th. Slack water can be slow but expect bites to increase in the middle hours of the flood. As the tides increase in height, the best fishing can be in the second and fourth hour of the tide when the flow isn't running at peak speed. The same applies on an ebbing tide.

If you fish dropping tides after the springs, look at the 1st to the 5th and then the 16th to the 19th. As the height of the tide decreases expect the middle hours of the flood and ebb to give a more consistent return. Plaice are mainly targeted on the drift, so a wind against the tide direction helps reduce the boat speed over the ground and gives you longer over the fish. Tides that coincide with an overcast sky produce better fishing than a bright sunny day, especially in shallower water.

TACTICS

For light tidal conditions a 12lb class rod, small 6500 sized multiplier and 15/20lb braid with a 20lb fluorocarbon leader is perfect. On bigger tides and in deeper water choose a 12/20lb class rod and reel loaded with 20 to 30lb braid and 30lb fluorocarbon leader.

A sliding ledger rig incorporating a zip slider boom slid onto the leader, then a 5mm bead with a size 4 rolling swivel tied on the end is simple and effective. Add three feet to six feet of 12lb to 20lb fluorocarbon, slide on four or five alternate black or green beads, or red and white beads, then a size 2 to 1/0 Aberdeen hook.

Use a lead just heavy enough to keep in contact with the seabed, let a good 40 to 50-yards of line off, then engage the reel and let the lead and bait drift naturally over the ground. When a bite comes, release a few feet of line to let the fish eat the bait, then retighten to hook the fish.

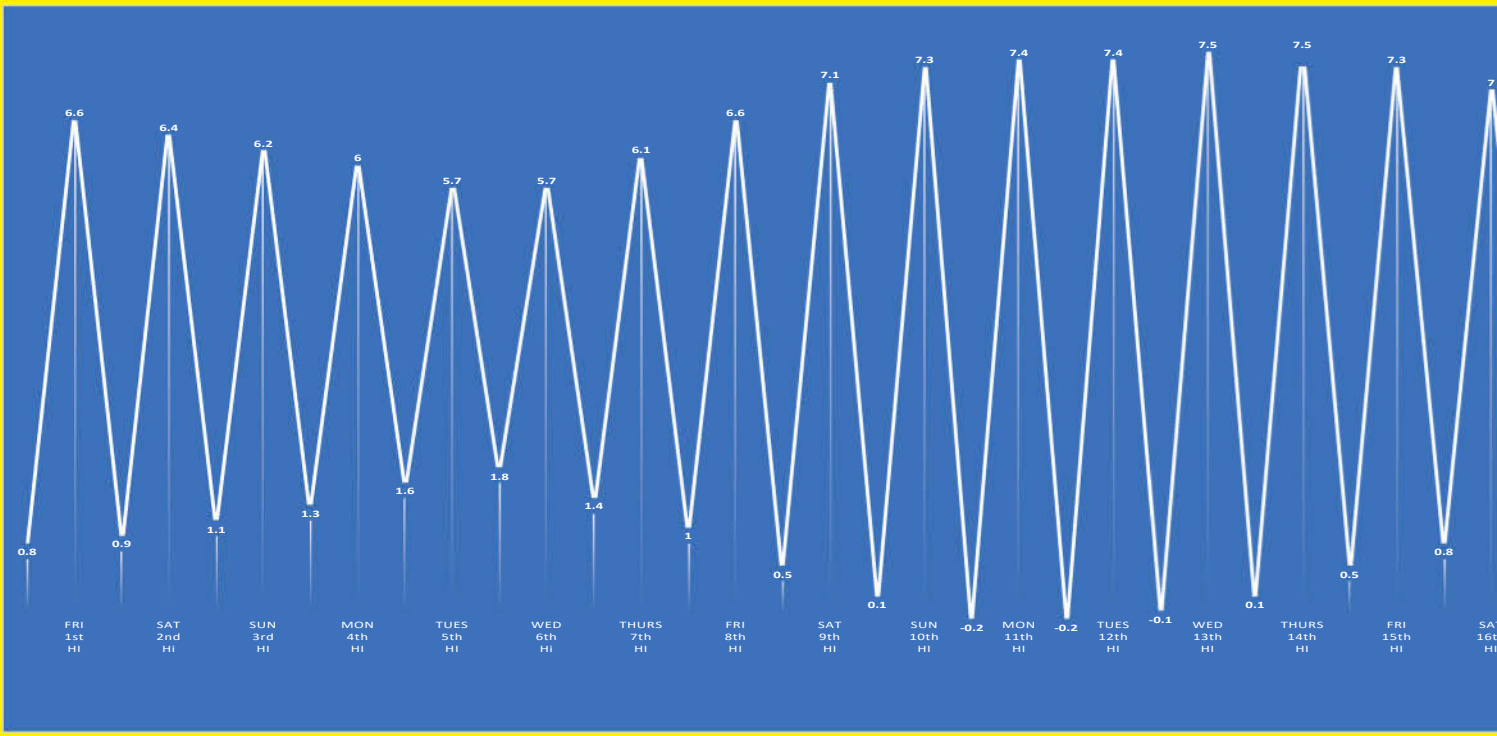
Top baits are lugworm, ragworm, peeler crab, razorfish, squid strips. Plaice particularly like cocktail baits with ragworm and squid strips left to flutter below the hook.

HOTSPOTS

Brighton, Newhaven, Weymouth, Gosport, Plymouth. Lancashire coast. In Ireland, west Cork, Kerry and Donegal.

OTHER POSSIBLE SPECIES

Turbot, brill, rays, dabs.



ESTUARY BASS

Bass come back into the estuaries as soon as the first new flush of peeler crab occurs in March. It's often a good time to pick up numbers of smaller fish, but also the odd early bigger specimen in the 5lb to10lb plus range.

TIDE TALK

Bass generally like a good push of tide in estuaries. Tides from the 7th to the 17th are all good, but those on the 7th to the 10th are optimum being rising tides prior to big spring tides. Also, from the 21st to the 31st, with the 22nd to the 25th, again, rising tides prior to a spring tide.

Bass come into the estuaries as soon as the new tide starts to flood if the water is deep enough to swim in. They use the tide flow to travel far into the estuary, first inside the main channel, then filtering off to investigate the narrow side creeks, especially those with muddy sides and covered in bladder wrack weed where crabs hide. They drop back into the main channel as soon as the ebb tide starts and gradually drop back seaward feeding as they go, giving you two chances to intercept them.

Areas to target for early tide bass are mussel beds, deeper scoured out holes in the main channel, and patches of rough ground. From middle tide to high water concentrate on the side creeks and fish tight in along the edges and where bends in the channels occur. This applies in reverse on the outgoing tide.

Bass will access the estuaries in broad daylight, but the better fishing is when low water occurs in the dark, during overcast days or, alternatively, if the sea is carrying a little colour. Heavy flood water will keep bass out of the inner estuary, so concentrate on the seaward channels only if this is evident.

TACTICS

A 11ft 6in 2-4oz rod is ideal matched to a 6500 multiplier or 5000 sized fixed spool and 18/20lb mono with a 30lb mono shock leader.

Rig wise, casting distance is not important so a sliding ledger is very effective at close range. Slide a size 4 link swivel onto the line, then a 5mm bead and tie on a size 4 rolling swivel. Add 24-inches of 15/20lb fluorocarbon and a size 2/0 to 4/0 Viking pattern hook.

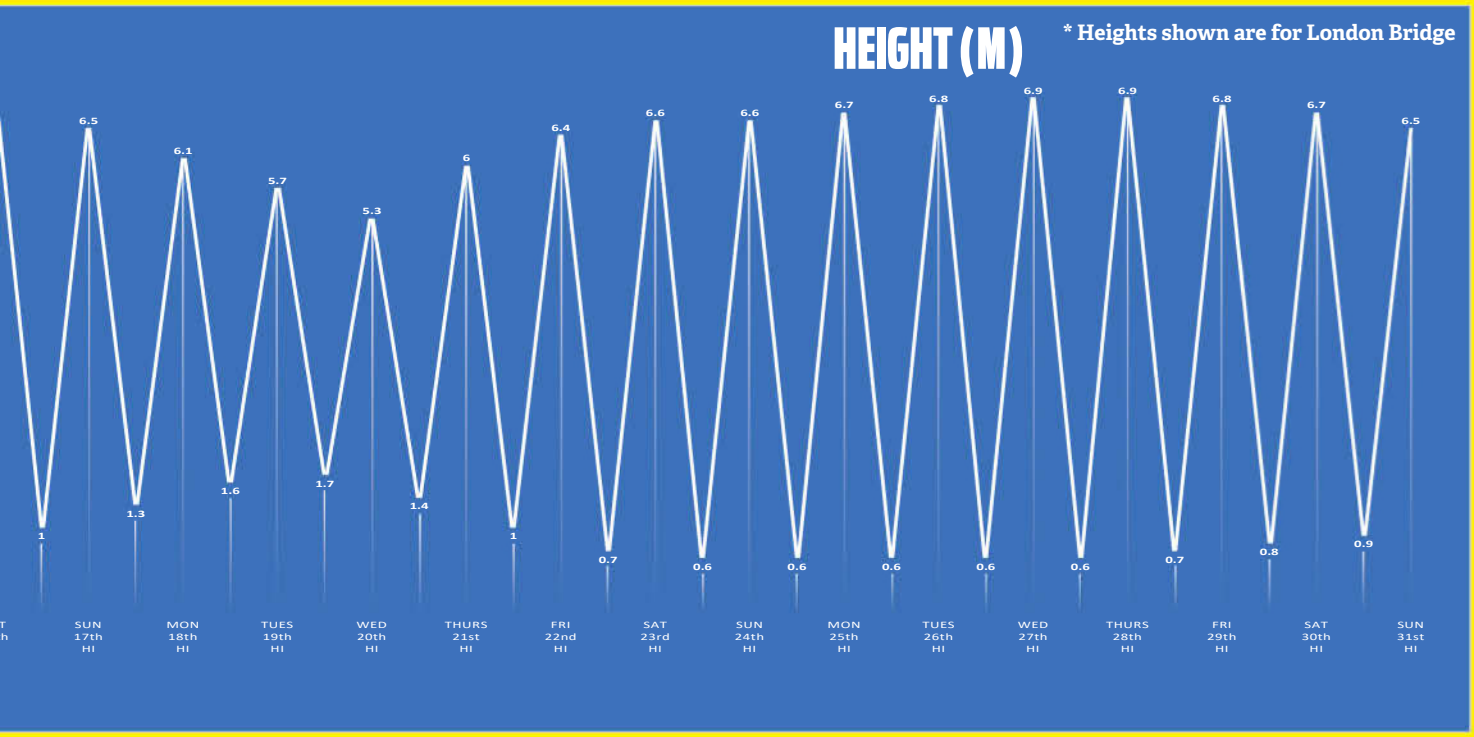
Top early season baits are peeler or soft crab, lugworm, ragworm and tip the worm baits with razorfish.

HOTSPOTS

Essex and Sussex, Devon and Cornish estuaries. The estuaries of south, mid and north Wales. Irish estuaries in Wicklow, Cork, Kerry.

OTHER POSSIBLE SPECIES

Flounder, plaice, outside chance of rays in bigger estuaries.



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Words
SIMON SMITH

Tales from the tideline

A QUESTION OF ETIQUETTE

Simon Smith asks whether poor standards and bad manners are damaging the reputation of sea angling. Is it time for a return of some traditional values?

Don't slouch! Get your elbows off that table! Don't chew with your mouth open! For goodness' sake, stop dragging your feet when you walk! The list went on and on, forming an exhaustive guidebook of "manners" by which anyone over the age of 35 or so will remember having to live their childhood. Whenever I asked my mother why it was that I had to follow so many rules to simply exist on a day-to-day basis, she would reply, "Because you were brought up, not dragged up".

To mothers everywhere, appearances were everything. How you behaved in public reflected life at home and so poor manners suggested poor parenting or poor family life, therefore the image must be maintained, come Hell or high water. Though we were poor as church mice when I was small, my clothes were clean and ironed and, should a spot of dirt or a mucky mark, no doubt the result of a day's play, be present on my face, out would come the hanky, coated in spit and rubbed across the offending mark until it was banished. For all my protestation and, I suspect the similar protests of many others of a similar age, when I look back, such things – the scrubbed front doorstep is another prime example – speak of a certain moral code, a pride in oneself and the face presented to the public. Most of all though, they speak of a certain standard of etiquette that we carry with us much later into our lives, even into our fishing habits.

Let's start by picturing the scene: you've waited all

through the working week knowing that a fishing session is on the horizon. You've planned and dreamed, you've prepared the tackle and thought of nothing but the variables of the session for days. Finally, that golden day comes and sees you arrive at your venue of choice where you set up, bait up and your first cast plops satisfyingly out into the surf. Lovely. You're just drifting off into a stress-free daydream when: "Caught anything?"

Yes, it can be annoying when the public encroaches upon our precious fishing time, particularly when they pop into the water for a swim or throw a stick into the surf right next to you for their dog to retrieve, but the fact of the matter is that people are interested in, and drawn to, anglers. When we are out on the beach or bank, we cut a mysterious, even strange, figure of interest, especially to those members of the public who never fish. They look at us and wonder how we carry out that strange alchemy of conjuring living creatures from a flat, seemingly featureless, expanse of water. What we anglers must also remember is that, when we encounter members of the general public like this, we are the face of angling that they see, so all we say and do helps to form their opinion of who and what anglers are. Who knows – maybe a kind word or an encouraging chat will inspire a complete stranger to take up rods of his or her own, like the time I was approached on the beach and, only a week later, the same stranger turned up at my front door to buy a rod I had listed for sale on a local market site!

Of course, where we as anglers need to remember our sociable side, the inverse can also be true, particularly amongst ourselves. We anglers can often display some strange and contradictory habits, behaviours that seem to run contrary to why it is that we fish in the first place. For a pastime that is considered a means of relaxation and contemplation, anglers can seem strangely given to the habit of crowding. We've all been there – the clear, crisp morning when you've walked a good distance from the car, heading for a virgin patch of beach you've had your eye on, feeling the need to just get away from it all and shrug off the stresses of the past week. Just as everything is done and you settle back on the seat box, coffee in hand, you feel as though… what's this?! A distant blob on the horizon… it's moving, growing larger… until it suddenly materialises into a human shape. Closer it comes, closer, until… "Alright mate?"

"Ummm…yeah." You're almost too stunned to speak and can only watch on as they walk barely 20yds beyond you, plonk down their kit and begin to set up. It's a familiar scenario, and one we've all experienced. Frustrating, yes, but "it's a free country" as the old adage goes. Of course, when there's a good run of fish at certain times of the year, it seems that all bets are off as far as angling etiquette is concerned. Being one of those who does tend to prefer a little space and solitude when they do occasionally manage to wet a line, I still recoil slightly at memories of the local breakwater when mackerel season arrived. The frenzy above the waterline matched that below the surface as dozens upon dozens of anglers stood shoulder-to-shoulder, metronomic arms pumping and winding, pumping and winding. As one angler heaved a full string of glittering mackerel, garfish and scad, they would step down from their perch upon the rocks only to be replaced by another, a latecomer who couldn't squeeze in anywhere else, sneaking in a cheeky cast or two whilst the unhooking commenced. Of course, this would lead to the usual arguments and quarrels, stretching the whole scene as far away from the image of a gentle waterside idyll as was possible becoming, perhaps, the closest thing that angling has which is comparable to football hooliganism. I still shudder to think of it to this day, especially when I think of the endless crossed lines and the bin bags filled with mackerel spoiling in the sun. I enjoy keeping an occasional fish for the table and would never criticise another angler for doing so. In fact, I believe it to be one of angling's rites of passage when a young or new angler first catches something sizeable enough to take home, cook and eat, a sequence that speaks to the hunter-gatherer within us all. However, as much as we, the angling community, malign the commercial fishing community for unsustainable husbandry of fish stocks, we anglers must also shoulder our portion of the responsibility.

"We anglers can often display some strange and contradictory habits, behaviours that seem to run contrary to why it is that we fish in the first place. For a pastime that is considered a means of relaxation and contemplation, anglers can seem strangely given to the habit of crowding"

In the early days of my angling life I devoured every book on which I could lay my hands, including older, more dated, books. Amongst the flared trousers, Argyll tank tops and antiquated tackle were pictures of anglers shouldering black bags full of fish as they trudged off the beach and smiling anglers kneeling behind a great mass of dead fish spread out on the beach in front of them. How many of those fish were actually consumed by the anglers in the

pictures, and how many were given away for the price of a pint, as an afterthought to family and neighbours, fed to the cat or even, dare I say it, ended up in the bin? Even now, as I think back to those photos, I feel like someone who missed a fantastic party, arriving only to find a few vol-au-vents and an opened, flat beer left behind. Yes, I agree that the damage caused to fish populations by recreational anglers is a proverbial and literal drop in the ocean compared to commercial fishing activities, but here, where the line between etiquette and future planning is blurred, the attitudes fostered by wanton greed, when it becomes acceptable to kill rather than return alive, become very damaging indeed.

When such attitudes are prevalent, the behaviour will often follow suit. When fish are seen as something less than vital, as a disposable commodity, they lose the immense value they hold to those of us who love to actually fish for them. Lost is all the immeasurable enjoyment that comes with preparing for a session, being out in the fresh air, the camaraderie of fishing with friends, the enjoyment of using certain tackle and a million other things that form the sport we so love. For a few, however, rather than toning down the dial so that all aspects of fishing can be enjoyed, the value spectrum is firmly set so that anything less than a specimen fish or a perfect session will never do. So-called 'minor' fish such as whiting, dogfish, pouting and so on are deemed to hold lesser value than more desirable species such as cod and bass, and when this happens, we can become dismissive of fish. As a young man I once came to blows with another angler when, as I simply passed by on a walk, witnessed him catch a dogfish, loudly declare its lack of worth in a not-so-pleasant expletive, and slam the defenceless creature against the concrete steps of the promenade on which he was fishing. Am I proud of this incident? No, I'm not, but I'm even less proud of a fellow angler who would do something so unacceptable, particularly as the public sees these kinds of brutal and irresponsible actions, and judge all anglers by this very skewed yardstick.

Before I run the risk of slipping into full rant mode, I'll bring my thoughts to a close with one final bugbear when it comes to angling etiquette: litter. It seems that, to an increasing number of people, the idea of leaving a little rubbish behind is as 'acceptable' as it is on the street. Unfortunately, society seems so numb to this problem that a handful of wrappers billowing on the wind or a few bottles rattling in the gutter have become no more than white noise, a tolerable trade-off for many of the conveniences that we enjoy today, translating this to the beaches and piers. A bird's nest of line here, a few shredded wrappers there, a handful of stinking scraps of old bait left to bake in the sun; all are, unfortunately, an increasingly common sight, but the actions of this handful of thoughtless individuals tarnishes an entire community of anglers, giving them a bad name in the eyes of the public. The well-used line about leaving only footprints behind may by now seem a little bit of a cliché, but it rings as true as it ever did. For cliché we should, perhaps, read 'traditional' here – to hark back to some traditional values, particularly when it comes to etiquette, might be no bad thing for, as my mother often said: "a few good manners go a long way", even on a beach in the middle of nowhere. ■

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TEAM VASS 350
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RRP £99.98 (New Edition 4)
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MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Oliver Heathfield, Watchet
FISH: 13lb 4oz cod **BAIT:** Whole joey mackerel
VENUE: Watchet Harbour

Darren Braby
FISH: 9lb 10oz 2dr gilthead bream
BAIT: Squid
VENUE: Alderney

Damion Fryer, Cornwall
FISH: 6lb 5oz ballan wrasse
BAIT: Pirate Lure
VENUE: South Cornwall rock mark

Mark Andrew from Jersey
FISH: 15lb 10oz bass
BAIT: Fresh lug worm
VENUE: Jersey beach

Steve Hobson, Isle of Wight
FISH: 20lb 4oz conger eel
BAIT: Pouting
VENUE: Fort Victoria, Isle of Wight
DATE: 15/12/23

Martin Lambden, Douglas
FISH: 4lb 5oz Couch's bream
BAIT: Ragworm, razorfish and squid
VENUE: Port St Mary, Isle of Man
DATE: 28/11/23

Will Butler, Isle of Wight
FISH: 14lb 8oz blue skate
VENUE: West Bexington
BAIT: Joey mackerel fillet

Chris Rollins, Shoreham
FISH: 9lb 13oz bass **BAIT:** Crab
VENUE: River Adur, Shoreham

Brian Dixon, Middlesborough
FISH: 8lb 9oz cod **BAIT:** Cart wings and crab coral
VENUE: Staithes beach

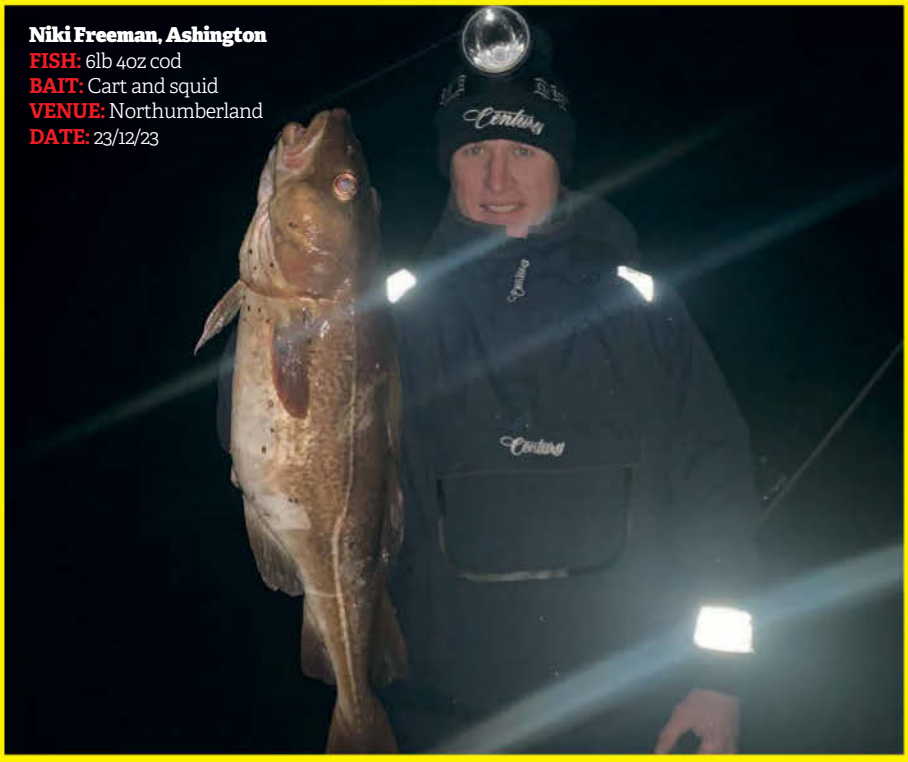
Tom Jenkinson
FISH: 27lb 4oz cod
BAIT: Cart
VENUE: Shetland

YOUR FISHING CATCHES

Brent Heywood, Llandudno
FISH: 11lb bass **BAIT:** Savage Gear metal lure **VENUE:** West Wales

Jay Pickup, Wallasey
FISH: 7lb cod **BAIT:** Peeler crab
VENUE: The Mersey

Dan Owens, North Wales
FISH: 17lb 4oz conger eel
VENUE: Anglesey rock mark **BAIT:** Anchovy



Niki Freeman, Ashington
FISH: 6lb 4oz cod
BAIT: Cart and squid
VENUE: Northumberland
DATE: 23/12/23

HOW TO ENTER

Email only to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk Please supply these details: angler's name, age, address, telephone number, email, type of FISH, weight of FISH, where caught, DATE caught, BAIT/rig, whether caught from shore or boat, if from charter boat, give name of boat, port and skipper. Please state if the FISH was retained or returned.

Send us your entries and win some great prizes

- **SHORE LURE OPTION: Solaris 4000 or 5000 reel, RRP: £60, Epixor 15-50g rod RRP: £80**
- **SHORE LURE OPTION: Solaris 4000 or 5000 reel, RRP: £60, Epixor 15-50g rod RRP: £80**
- **BOAT: Classic CLX, RRP: £60 Cortez Boat Rod, RRP: £90**
- **SHORE BAIT OPTION: DSA reel RRP: £60, Wave Power surf rod, RRP: £80**

YOUR TARGETS...

Catch a FISH on this list at the weight or above in your region to qualify for the chance to win prizes in our Mission catch competition. To enter, send us the details requested above and email that information and your picture to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk.

	SHORE	BOAT
Bass	7lb	9lb
Black bream	2lb	3lb
Red bream	2lb	3lb
Couch's & Pandora's bream	1lb 8oz	1lb 8oz
Gilthead bream	4lb	4lb
Ray's bream	3lb	3lb
Brill	3lb	5lb
Bull huss	8lb	12lb
Cod	7lb	10lb
Conger	20lb	40lb
Dab & megrim	1lb	1lb
Dover/lemon sole	2lb	2lb
Flounder	2lb	2lb
Halibut	20lb	20lb
Ling	5lb	19lb
Mullet	4lb	5lb
Golden grey mullet	2lb	2lb
Plaice	2lb	4lb
Pollack/coal	6lb	12lb
Common skate	60lb	100lb
Blonde ray	12lb	17lb
Thornback ray	9lb	14lb
Small-eyed/undulate	7lb	11lb
Ray (other)	3lb	5lb
Sting/eagle ray	20lb	25lb
Smoothhound	10lb	14lb
Spurdog	7lb	11lb
Tope	27lb	35lb
Trigger	2lb	3lb
Turbot	10lb	13lb
Wrasse (ballan)	4lb	4lb
Wrasse (other)	1lb	1lb
Blue shark	-	60lb
Porbeagle/thresher	-	100lb

THE RULES...

- **Only catches since December are eligible.**
- **We must see a picture of the fish.**
- **We may refuse an entry.**
- **Enter by email only (please include all of the information requested in How to Enter panel) to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk**
- **Prizes as stated (Okuma reserves the right to send alternatives).**

MONTHLY WINNERS:
SHORE: Darren Braby, Alderney
BOAT: Martin Lambden, Isle of Man

YOUNG RODS

Sea Angler's celebration of the great angling achievements of its many younger readers

In association with

▲ **Jackson Evans**, aged seven, caught this bass at a venue in Swansea Bay. He used a joey mackerel on a 5ft pulley rig. The fish weighed 4lb 10oz. It was returned.

◀ **Oliver Sagar** had his personal best shore caught haddock weighing just over 2lb. He was using a one up one down rig using lug. He was fishing on the Holderness coast. His younger brother, Oscar Sagar, had one of just over 1lb.

▼ **Winter Protheroe**, aged eight, caught her first ever bass in a Fur & Feather match for Saundersfoot Sea Anglers Club. The bass measured 51cm and was released. She can't wait for the next match.

▲ Fourteen-year-old **Adam Hambley**, from Callington in Cornwall, had this 1lb 6oz whiting using lamprey, squid and prawn cocktail on a running ledger rig off his own boat on the River Tamar.

▶ **Ashley Strelling** caught this fine 8lb pollack while fishing on Mirage Charter using a Fiiish Crazy eel khaki

▲ **Tom Harker**, 14, from Hampshire caught this 1lb 10oz bass from Lymington using ragworm on 23 December.

▲ Twelve-year-old **Joshua Peel** with his first sizable bass on his first ever fishing session, caught on ragworm while fishing at Keyhaven Harbour, Hampshire with his grandad.

£25 TACKLE VOUCHER WINNERS

Fishingmegastore.com awards a £25 voucher prize to each of two winners - the youngster with the best shore fish and another with the top boat catch. The winners can use the voucher to select tackle from Fishingmegastore.com which is based in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

■ **Send your Young Rods entries by email to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk**

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Order before 2.30pm Monday to Friday & get your order **NEXT DAY** (Sat extra).

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anyfish anywhere
Tournament Match Pro Mk2 Review

"it has to be one of the most powerful rods I've ever had the pleasure of casting; it's absolutely brutal. The tip speed is immense and when the timing all comes together perfectly the rod's performance is totally exquisite."
Paul Fenech, Sea Angler Magazine

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Worlds first truly Professional standard beach fishing rods

NEW MATCH PRO MKII 13' 7" 150-175g £519.99 in stock See Website

Grand Prix Pro Mk2
Slimmed down version, lighter by about 3oz's and has a 24mm butt + Reducer.
Multiplier 13ft 10in — RRP £599.99 NOW £459.99
Casts 4-7oz (150-200g)

Estuary Rods MK2 — RRP NOW
11ft - Casts 30-90g Fixed Spool or Multiplier..£249.99 £184.99
12ft - Casts 30-90g Fixed Spool or Multiplier..£249.99 £189.99

GBFS Pro MK2
Fixed Spool 14ft + Reducer — RRP £574.99 NOW £439.99
Casts 4-8oz (150-200g)

Tournament Match Pro MK2
Multiplier 13ft 11in + Reducer — RRP £574.99 NOW £439.99
Casts 5-7oz (150-200g)

Tournament Bass Pro Mk1 NEW
12ft 6in - 90-150g — RRP £325 NOW £275
Suitable for Fixed Spool & Multiplier

DAIWA SURF RODS
Fishing rods for beach fishing

AIR SURF - Surf Rods
- SVF and X45
- Mega Top Carbon Hybrid Tip
- Guides: Fuji K Guide with Alconite (Multiplier)
- Guides: Fuji LC with Alconite (Fixed Spool)

			RRP	NOW
13ft 6in Multiplier	2 Piece	4-8oz	£515	£369
14ft 2in Multiplier	2 Piece	4-8oz	£525	£389
15ft 3in Fixed Spool	3 Piece	3-7oz	£550	£399

SALTIST - Surf Rods

		RRP	NOW
12ft 6in Multiplier	100-200g	£230	£169
13ft 6in Multiplier	100-200g	£260	£215
14ft 2in Multiplier	100-200g	£265	£219
14ft Fixed Spool	84-150g	£270	£179
14ft Fixed Spool Hybrid	3-6oz	£280	£199
15ft Fixed Spool Hybrid	3-6oz	£295	£199

TOURNAMENT - PRO Surf Rods

2 Piece		RRP	NOW
11ft 6in Bass Fixed Spool	2-4oz	£275	£229
13ft 6in Multiplier	3-7oz	£355	£289
14ft 6in Multiplier	4-8oz	£355	£289

TOURNAMENT - HT Surf Rods

			RRP	NOW
14ft	Fixed Spool Hybrid	3-6oz	£340	£249
15ft	Fixed Spool Hybrid	3-6oz	£360	£269

DAIWA SURF RODS
Fishing rods for beach fishing

SEAHUNTER Z-BU- Surf Rods
- DPS Style fixed reel seat
- Ring spacing for fixed spool
- Premium grade carbon blanks
- Ergonomic shaped EVA rear grip
- Stainless frame guides with oxide rings

			RRP	NOW
11ft	Bass Travel Rod	2-4oz		SOLD OUT
11ft 6in	Bass	2-4oz	£90	£59
12ft	Fixed / Multiplier	3-7oz	£110	£69
13ft	Fixed / Multiplier	3-7oz	£115	£69
14ft	Fixed Spool	3-7oz		SOLD OUT

CROSSCAST 33 - Surf Rods
For distance beach work with a big fixed spool over clean to medium ground. The built in carbon Hybrid Tip, ensures bite detection across the species mix.

		RRP	NOW
13ft 10in Hybrid Tip	100-225g	£125	£89
14ft 10in Hybrid Tip	100-225g	£140	£115

SANDSTORM - Surf Rods
- Premium Carbon Blanks • Fuji BRC Butt Cap
- Split EVA Grip Handle • Sliding DPS Reel Seat
- SEAGUIDE Deep Drawn Frame Guides with Aluminium Oxide Ring

		RRP	NOW
12ft 6in Multiplier	100-200g	£180	£129.99
13ft 6in Multiplier	100-200g	£190	£139.99
14ft 2in Multiplier	100-200g	£190	£139.99
12ft 6in Fixed Spool	100-200g	£180	£129.99
13ft 6in Fixed Spool	100-200g	£190	£129.99

DAIWA 4, 5 & 6 PIECE TRAVEL RODS

- HVF • X45
- 3DX • V-Joint
- Fuji 'O' Ring Guides
- Rubber Gimbal
- Multi Section assembly for compact pack down

Premium Grade Blank • Shrink Tube Handle • DPS Slide Locking Reel Seat • Stainless Frame Guides with Aluminium Oxide Rings

Saltist 4 & 5 Piece Travel Spin Rods

			RRP	NOW
6ft 5in - 28-84g	4 Piece		£195	£159
7ft - 14-42g	4 Piece		£210	£169
8ft - 14-42g	5 Piece		£220	£179
8ft 6in - 80-140g	5 Piece	Travel	£230	£189

Tournament 4 Piece Travel Boat Rods

			RRP	NOW
6ft 6in - 30-60lbs	4 Piece		£235	£169
7ft 6in - 15-25lbs or 25-40lbs	4 Piece		£235	£169

Seahunter Z Bass Travel Rod - 6 Piece
11ft - 2-4oz — 6 Piece — SOLD OUT

SHIMANO SURFCASTING REELS

Surfleader Ci4+ Reel	Power Aero 14000 XSB Reel	Fliegen 3SSD Reel	Bull's Eye 9120 Surf Reel	Bull's Eye 9100 Surf Reel	Aero Technium MgS XSD - 14000 Reel
RRP £284.99	RRP £399.99	RRP £459.99	RRP £419.99	RRP £419.99	RRP £699.99
£199	£299.99	£399.99	£349.99	£369.99	£589.99

Sea Angler PICK OF THE MONTH

SHIMANO SURF RODS
Fishing rods for beach fishing

AERLEX Surf Rods — 3 PIECES
- Full Carbon blank • Fast action
- Seaguide XOG, XEOG or Lowrider guides
- Shimano DPS reel seat

			RRP	NOW
14ft	Hybrid	150g	£129.99	£99
14ft	Hybrid	200g	£129.99	£99
14ft 6in	Hybrid	150g	£134.99	£99
14ft 6in	Hybrid	200g	£144.99	£110
13ft	Hybrid Lowrider	200g	£129.99	£110
14ft	Hybrid Lowrider	200g	£144.99	£110
14ft	Hybrid Tubular	200g	£149.99	£110

BEASTMASTER - Surf Rods
Ftted with a Shimano DPS reel seat with a custom casting grip handle for maximum grip pressure, even in wet conditions.

		RRP	NOW
4.25m Surf Hybrid J	200g 3 Piece		SOLD OUT
4.25m Surf Hybrid J	225g - Low Rider 3 Pce	£124.99	£89
4.25m Surf Tubular J	225g 3 Piece	£104.99	£79
4.25m Surf Tubular J	225g - Low Rider 3 Pce	£124.99	£89
4.25m FX Surf Tele	150g 6 Piece	£89.99	£79.99
4.25m FX Surf Tele	170g 6 Piece	£94.99	£84.99
4.25m FX Surf Tele	200g 6 Piece	£109.99	£99.99

2 or 6 PIECES

NEXAVE - Surf Rods
Supplied with 2 Tips, either tubular for extra distance casting or solid for a good bite detection.

Surf Lite / Rough Ground Rods

			RRP	NOW
13ft	Tubular - Lite	120g	£134.99	£69
13ft	Tubular - Rough	225g		SOLD OUT

2 PIECE

SONIK SURF REELS

SKS AVX DOMINATOR X NEW

SKS 8000
Designed to give smooth long casts, the large handle helps to speed gear and fish back to the beach.
RRP £49.99 **£36.99**

AVX 10,000
Superbly smooth & highly functional reel with slow oscillation & long coned spool for super smooth line lay and ultra-long distance casts.
RRP £149.99 **£99.99**

DOMINATOR XS 10,000
Built to withstand the demands of harsh saltwater environments the massive 18kg micro adjust drag will cope with battling large fish in tough conditions..
£64.99

FLADEN RESCUE SYSTEM
ONE PIECE FLOTATION SUIT

An affordable flotation suit that does not compromise on safety. With the same extreme buoyancy and thermal protection that you expect from all Fladen Rescue System Suits. An Updated model of Fladen's popular 845 suit, the 845XY features the same functions and quality that you're used to, but with a modern touch.
RRP £189.99 **£159.99**

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anyfish anywhere Blue Label Range
Exceptional performance both in terms of casting and fishing at a price point that makes them very accessible.

four&bait rod mk2

Surfcasting Rods	RRP	OUR PRICE
13ft 3-5oz Fixed Spool	£225	£169.99
13ft 3-5oz Multiplier	£225	£169.99
14ft 3-5oz Fixed Spool	£235	£179.99
14ft 3-5oz Multiplier	£235	£179.99

six&bait rod mk2

Surfcasting Rods	RRP	OUR PRICE
13ft 5-7oz Fixed Spool	£255	£194.99
13ft 5-7oz Multiplier	£255	£194.99
14ft 5-7oz Fixed Spool	£270	£199.99
14ft 5-7oz Multiplier	£270	£199.99
15ft 5-7oz Fixed Spool	£280	£209.99
15ft 5-7oz Multiplier	£280	£209.99

ASSO FISHING LINE & PE/CO BRAID
Choice of 12 Lines & Leaders

DAIWA SURF REELS
Fishing reels for beach fishing

Shorecast 5000B & 6000B	20 Crosscast 35 SCW 5000C QD	20 Crosscast 45 SCW 5000C QD	21 Crosscast 45 SCW QD OT	23 Emblem Surf 45 SCW QD	20 T Basia 45 SCW 5000C QD
Fixed spool surf reel	Surf reel	Surf reel	Fixed spool reel	Surfcasting reel	Surf reel
RRP £94.99 **£64.99**	RRP £125 **£99**	RRP £150 **£115**	RRP £165 **£119.99**	RRP £230 **£199.99**	RRP £790 **£599**

DAIWA MULTIPLIER SURF REELS

7HT Millionaire Tournament	7HT Millionaire Mag	7HT Millionaire Mag Super Tuned	SL20SH Sealine Slosh	SL30SH Sealine Slosh
RRP £225 **£159.99**	RRP £399 **£299.99**	RRP £595 **£419.99**	RRP £135 **£92.99**	RRP £135 **£92.99**

SHIMANO SURFCASTING REELS

Aerlex 10000XSB Surf Casting Reel	Speedmaster 14000XSD Surf Reel	Ultegra XSD 5500 Surf Reel / Big Pit Reel	Ultegra 14000 XSD Surf Reel	Ultegra XSE 14000 Surf Reel	Ultegra CI4+ 14000 XSC Surf Reel
RRP £114.99	RRP £164.99	RRP £179.99	RRP £174.99	RRP £209.99	RRP £299.99
£89.99	**£129.99**	**£149.99**	**SOLD OUT**	**£149.99**	**£225**

SHIMANO SURF RODS
Fishing rods for beach fishing

SPEEDMASTER - H Surf Rod — 2 PIECE
- Sensitive hybrid tips • Fuji Fazlite K-type / Fuji Lowrider guides
- High Modulus Full Carbon blank • Fuji DPS reel seat
- Diaflash construction in the lower part

			RRP	NOW
14ft	3 Piece - 150g - Fuji Fazlite K-type		£184.99	£139
14ft	3 Piece - 200g - Fuji Fazlite K-type		£194.99	£145
14ft 6in	3 Piece - 150g - Fuji Fazlite K-type		£199.99	£149
14ft 6in	3 Piece - 200g - Fuji Fazlite K-type		£204.99	£155
13ft	3 Piece - 200g - Fuji Low Rider Concept "O"		£189.99	£139
14ft	3 Piece - 200g - Fuji Low Rider Concept "O"		£194.99	£145
14ft	3 Piece - 200g - Fuji Low Rider Concept "O"		£194.99	£145

SPEEDMASTER - BXG Surf Rods — CLEARANCE
- HPC200+NANO technology

			RRP	OFFER PRICE
14ft	Tubular	225g	£204.99	£99
14ft	Solid	225g	£204.99	£99
14ft	Hybrid	225g	£204.99	£99
14ft 6in	Tubular	225g	£214.99	£99
14ft 6in	Solid	225g	£214.99	£99
14ft 6in	Hybrid	225g	£214.99	£99

3 PIECE

SPEEDMASTER - Beach Rods — CLEARANCE
High Modulus Full Carbon + HPC blank with Nanosheet technology produces lighter, stronger blank with increased responsiveness and casting distance.

		RRP	OFFER PRICE
14ft 9in	Solid + 3 Tips	120g / 4oz	£214.99	£110
15ft 5in	Solid	150g / 6oz	£214.99	£110

3 PIECES

SONIK GRAVITY XS HT

Unground carbon finish at rod joints makes it easier to take apart after use
White hollow carbon tip for easy bite detection in poor light conditions
Fuji corrosion control frames provide 7 times more corrosion resistance
Shrink wrap on the lower handle to improve grip whilst casting
Super lightweight high modulus carbon blank
XS multi-directional nanofibre tip section lay-up
Fuji Alconite K Series guides
Fuji DPS reel fitting

"It's an absolutely fantastic shore rod"
"The ultimate power is utterly immense and evident during the casting process"
Paul Fenech - Sea Angler review issue 566 Jan/Feb '19

	RRP	
14ft - 5-7oz - 2 Piece	£329.99	£249.99
15ft 4in - 4-8oz - 3 Piece	£349.99	£269.99

A true all rounder...

FLADEN
ONE PIECE FLOTATION SUIT

The lightest suit on the market. Has the same extreme buoyancy and thermal protection as the other Fladen Rescue Systems

RRP £189.99
£159.99

SCANDIA TWO PIECE FLOTATION SUIT

The Bib and Brace has a built in buoyancy, and when worn with the jacket exceeds the current Flotation Suit regulation requirements.

The new Bib & Brace trousers becomes a certified flotation suit only when worn with the Flotation Jacket

	RRP	NOW
Flotation Jacket	£137.99	£119.99
Flotation Trousers (2020)	£119.99	£89.99

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AKIOS BEACHCASTERS

FURY FX435 SRS POWER
Glow-In-The-Dark Tip
+ CONTINENTAL ROD + 3 PIECE
4.35m / 4ft 6in
RRP £159.99 £145
AIRSPEED SURF 435
CONTINENTAL ROD + 3 PIECE
4.35m / 14ft 6in RRP £379.99 £299
AIRPOWER SURF 435 RXP
CONTINENTAL ROD + 3 PIECE
4.35m / 14ft 6in RRP £439.99 £369
AIRTORQUE SURF 435
CONTINENTAL ROD + 3 PIECE
4.35m / 14ft 6in RRP £399.99 £349
AIRPOWER SURF 435 SRS
CONTINENTAL ROD + 3 PIECE
4.35m / 14ft 6in RRP £439.99 £369
AIRLYTE 355
CONTINENTAL ROD + 2 PIECE
3.55m / 11ft 6in
RRP £199.99 £169
CREED GP420
2 PIECE
13ft 10in RRP £449.99 £399
AIRPOWER SURF 420 GTR
CONTINENTAL ROD + 2 PIECE
4.2m / 14ft RRP £449.99 £379

AKIOS COMBO DEALS

SAVE UP TO £149

FURY FX420 CONTINENTAL ROD c/w UTOPIA CX8 REEL	FURY FX450 CONTINENTAL ROD c/w UTOPIA CX8 REEL	HELLRAZOR SS420 CONTINENTAL ROD c/w UTOPIA CX8 REEL	AIRSPEED SURF 435 CONTINENTAL ROD BLACK c/w UTOPIA SX8 REEL
14ft 100g-180g • 3 Piece	15ft 100g-180g • 3 Piece	14ft 112g-225g • 3 Piece	14ft 6in 112g-225g • 3 Piece
RRP £284.98	RRP £288.98	RRP £299.98	RRP £549.98
ONLY £199.99	ONLY £199.99	ONLY £199.99	ONLY £399.99

AKIOS BEACHCASTERS

AKIOS SURFCASTING REELS

Fishing reels for beach fishing

Fury FX8	Fireloop	The Guvnor GUV GX8	Air Loop R8 / R10	Utopia CX8 / SX8	Ironloop AK100
Fixed spool reel	Fixed spool reel	Fixed spool surf reel	Long cast fixed spool reel	Fixed spool reel	Fixed spool reel
RRP £74.99 £59	RRP £109.99 £89.99	RRP £149.99 £79	R8 - RRP £146.99 £119 10 - RRP £154.99 £129	CX8 - RRP £129.99 £89 SX8 - RRP £169.99 £125	RRP £249.99 £199

AKIOS

A forward thinking company based in the UK. Developed by anglers for anglers who demand new, innovative and durable fishing tackle.

WHEN DISTANCE MATTERS

AKIOS IRON SPIN 50 FIXED SPOOL REEL

A powerhouse reel in a compact 5000 size body specifically engineered for targeting large predatory fish both from the shore and boat. Whether you're pursuing large catches like Tope, Blue Sharks and Turbot while out on a boat or engaging in lure fishing for tenacious predators in Norway or the Atlantic such as large Cod, Pollack, Amberjacks or Dorado, the AKIOS IRONSPIN 50 is up to the challenge.

RRP £169.99
£149.99

- Colossal 55lb/25kg Drag System
- Tough Metal Alloy Body & Rotor
- Deep & Shallow Spools
- 8+1 Stainless Bearings

DAIWA BOAT RODS

Fishing rods suitable for boat trips

Kenzaki Super Boat Rods - 2, 3 & 4 piece - 13 Models
RRP £190 from £149

Seahunter Z-BU Boat Rods - 2 piece - 4 Models.....from £49

Saltist Jigging/Popping Boat Rods - 2 piece - 3 Models.....from £155

Tournament Boat Rods - 2 piece - 5 Models.....RRP £215 from £149

Team Daiwa X Boat Rods - 2 piece - 3 Models.....RRP £170 from £129

DAIWA BOAT REELS

Fishing reels for sea fishing

Sealine Slosh	18 Saltist	Saltist	20 Saltiga LD	20 Saltiga (G)
Boat reel	Boat reel	Level wind reel	Single & 2 speed boat reels	Saltwater spinning reel
from £92.99	from £239.99	from £239.99	from £399	from £849

SHIMANO STAND-UP BOAT RODS

Fishing rods for sea fishing

TLD - A Stand-Up Boat Rods

This rod is the perfect choice when you want to fish for big tuna or shark.

- XT60 + Biofibre blank
- Machined from marine grade aluminum and anodized to prevent corrosion.

	RRP	NOW
1.67m 20lb	£124.99	£99
1.67m 30lb Roller	£189.99	£139
1.67m 50lb Roller	SOLD OUT	
1.67m 80lb Roller	£219.99	£169

VENGEANCE - Stand-Up Boat Rods

- Perfect for small boats

	RRP	NOW
5ft 5in8lb - 16lb	£64.99	£35
5ft 5in16lb - 20lb	£64.99	£35
5ft 5in20lb - 30lb	£64.99	£35
5ft 5in30lb - 50lb	SOLD OUT	

TYRNOS - A stand-Up Boat Rods

- ALPS heavy duty SIC lined guides
- Ideal for UK Shark Fishing

	RRP	NOW
1.65m30lb	SOLD OUT	
1.65m50lb	SOLD OUT	
1.65m80lb	SOLD OUT	

TIAGRA - Hyper Stand-Up Boat Rods

- High pressure carbon blanks • AFTO guides
- Pacific Bay Reelseat

	RRP	NOW
1.75m30lb	£414.99	£269
1.73m50lb Bent Butt	£434.99	£299
1.6m 80lb Bent Butt	£534.99	£399

SHIMANO BOAT REELS

Charter Special TR LD Special 1000/2000	TLD LEVER DRAG	TORIUM A HG	TEKOTA A	TYRNOS
SOLD OUT	Single & 2 Speed - 7 Models	5 Models	6 Models	6 Models
	from £129.99	from £179.99	from £189.99	from £199.99

SHIMANO STAND-UP BOAT RODS

TIAGRA XTR-A STAND-UP TROLLING

	RRP	NOW
5' 5" - 80lb	£329.99	SOLD OUT

TIAGRA HYPER STAND-UP

	RRP	NOW
1.75m - 30lb	£414.99	£269
1.73m - 50lb Bent Butt	£434.99	£299
1.6m - 80lb Bent Butt	£534.99	£399

TIAGRA ULTRA GAME STAND-UP

	RRP	NOW
5'4" - 50lb	£924.99	£549
5'4" - 80lb	£934.99	£599

TIAGRA LTD EDITION ULTRA A STAND-UP

	RRP	NOW
5'5" - 30lb - 50lb	£695	£349
5'5" - 50lb - 80lb		SOLD OUT

SHIMANO BOAT REELS

SpeedMaster LD II	TALICA	OCEA JIGGER	OCEA JIGGER F CUSTOM	TIAGRA
6 Models	5 Models	Silver - 2 Models	2 Models	4 Models
from £189.99	from £299.99	from £369.99	from £439.99	from £549.99

Snowbee NEW

DEEP BLUE JIGGING RODS

Ultra-lightweight for all day fishing comfort but use high modulus carbon for a fast, powerful action, to impart maximum movement to the jigs. At 6' 6" they are the ideal length for jigging, long enough to work the jig effectively, but short enough to apply pressure to set the hook when the inevitable smash takes occur.

			RRP	NOW
10250	6ft 6in	30-100g	3 Piece	£134.99 £115
10251	6ft 6in	120g	3 Piece	£134.99 £115
10252	6ft 6in	200g	3 Piece	£134.99 £115

DEEP BLUE SPINNING RODS

The perfect combination of the latest thinking in rod design coupled with Snowbee technology to bring a new range of lure spinning rods at the cutting edge of modern lure fishing design.

				RRP	NOW
10255	7ft 3in	2-15g	4 Piece	£134.99	£115
10256	8ft	10-30g	4 Piece	£149.99	£129
10257	8ft	20-50g	4 Piece	£154.99	£135
10258	9ft	10-30g	4 Piece	£157.99	£139
10259	9ft	20-50g	4 Piece	£159.99	£139

Snowbee NEW

DEEP BLUE² BOAT RODS

Over the years, these rods have been steadily upgraded, but fans of the original Deep Blue range need not worry, as the latest Deep Blue² models, have an even lighter, crisper action than their predecessors!

Finished in the same lustrous deep blue, with subtle cross-whippings and decals and using lightweight graphite reel seats and chrome-plated stainless steel rings to prevent corrosion. Accurately rated to IGFA line classes and at 7ft 7ins they offer the ideal length for the serious boat angler and include a model to suit all fishing situations.

					RRP	NOW
10201	7ft 7in	IGFA 8lbs	Class	Butt Cap	£139.99	£119
10209	7ft 7in	IGFA 8lbs	Class 'S-Flex'	Butt Cap	£139.99	£119
10202	7ft 7in	IGFA 12lbs	Class	Butt Cap	£139.99	£119
10205	7ft 7in	IGFA 12lbs	Class 'S-Flex'	Butt Cap	£139.99	£119
10203	7ft 7in	IGFA 20lbs	Class	Gimbal	£149.99	£129
10204	7ft 7in	IGFA 30lbs	Class	Gimbal	£149.99	£129

10201 - 8lb (4KG) CLASS
Ultra-sensitive inshore rod, for bass, plaice, brill etc.

10209 - 8lb (4KG) CLASS 'S-FLEX'
Ultra-soft Korean S-Grip tip section, for supreme sensitivity.

10210 - 12lb (6KG) CLASS
Perfect choice for the inshore angler fishing reefs, inshore drop-offs, reef pollack etc.

10202 - 12lb (6KG) CLASS 'S-FLEX'
ultra-sensitive tip. For heavier bait fishing, turbot, black bream & livebait.

10203 - 20lb (10LB) CLASS
Best 'all-rounder' in the range. For inshore fishing for bass etc, & the hardest fighting wreck pollack.

10204 - 30lb (15KG) CLASS
Ideal for fishing wrecks. Powerful rod great for hauling monster conger & ling out of deep water.

Okuma CAVALLA REELS

INSPIRED FISHING

CAVALLA CAV-SNS RH	CAVALLA CAV-SS RH	CAVALLA CAV-SII RH	CAVALLA CAV-SNII RH	CAVALLA CAV-12II RH	CAVALLA CAV-SNIILX LH
Single Speed Lever Drag Reel - £199	Single Speed Lever Drag Reel - £209	2 Speed Lever Drag Reel - £225	Two-Speed Lever Drag Reel - £210	Two-Speed Lever Drag Reel - £299	Two-Speed Lever Drag Reel - £249

Okuma MAKAIRA BIG GAME REELS

INSPIRED FISHING

BIG GAME REELS

MAKAIRA® MK-30 II	MAKAIRA® MK-50 II	MAKAIRA® MK-50W II	MAKAIRA® MK-80 II
Big Game Reel	Big Game Reel	Big Game Reel	Big Game Reel
£499	£559	£569	£895

E+OE Prices subject to change. Goods subject to availability

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Okuma MAKAIRA

INSPIRED FISHING

Inspired by strength. Constructed from the finest, strongest materials available these are tough and durable spinning reels, especially for big gamen fish.

SPINNING REELS

Makaira MK-10000L
Spinning Reel - Left Hand
£599

Makaira MK-20000LS
Spinning Reel - Left Hand
£599

Makaira MK-30000LS
Spinning Reel - Left Hand
£649

Okuma TESORO

INSPIRED FISHING — SPINNING REELS

NEW

"The number one sales driver is the IPX-7 waterproof rating covering the body and the spool." Angling International

With hydro blocking technology for saltwater environments. 100% waterproof, strong, light weight aluminum body, specially reinforced high strength brass gears and a high output carbonite drag with Cal's drag grease on a full Dual Force Drag- (DFD) system, for tackling big game fish such as tuna and swordfish.

	RRP	NOW
8000PA SP Low Speed	£341.99	£299.99
10000PA SP Low Speed	£341.99	£299.99
14000PA SP Low Speed	£341.99	£299.99
18000PA SP Low Speed	£363.99	£319.99
20000PA SP Low Speed	£363.99	£319.99

Oversized, precision machine cut alloy main gear

Okuma SALINA

INSPIRED FISHING — SPINNING REELS

NEW

"This new breed of reels offers another option for elite anglers." Angling International

One of the best saltwater fishing reels on the market. Features Okuma's rigid Litecast construction, Dual Force Drag System for extreme stopping powe, proprietary High Density Gearing with corrosion resistant coating, high-speed gear ratio and customized aluminum handle.

	RRP	NOW
8000 Spinning	£195.99	£159.99
10000 Spinning	£198.99	£159.99
14000 Spinning	£198.99	£164.99
4000H Spin High-Speed	£183.99	£174.99
5000H Spin High-Speed	£183.99	£179.99
6000H Spin High-Speed	£187.99	£179.99

Vanquish FC

MGL SERIES

SHIMANO

Beyond Lightness

Pinnacle of lightweight engineering for finesse anglers seeking the ultimate in performance.

Equipped with the lightest Magnumlite Rotor. Perfect balance, lightness and low inertia rotation, produces exceptional performance and awareness.

1000, 2000, 2500, 3000, 4000, 5000

11 Models from **£399.99**

DAIWA 22 EXIST

The future of Daiwa Spinning Reels is AIRDRIVE DESIGN. By reducing the weight of rotor, spool & bail assembly, a lighter rotation is achieved. The effortless rotation allows the angler to feel the true joy of trouble free function. This new chapter starts with 22 EXIST.

22 Exist PC LT	2500D G	22 Exist LT	4000D G
22 Exist LT	2000D-P G	22 Exist LT	5000D-C G
22 Exist LT	3000D G		

RRP £850-£900 - 5 Models Available

from **£699**

Is this the BEST spinning reel ever made!

NEW

DAIWA BASS LURE RODS

Fishing rods for sea bass fishing

Sandstorm Bass Spinning Rods

- Premium Carbon Blanks
- Fixed Spool DPS Reel Seat
- Seaguide Deep Drawn Frame Guides with Aluminium Oxide Ring
- Split EVA Grip Handle

		RRP	NOW
11ft 6in	28-84g	£135	£110

2 PIECES

SALTIST - Bass Spinning Rods

- HVF High Volume Fibre
- X45 Technology

		RRP	NOW
8ft	10-35g	£185	£139
8ft 6in	10-35g	£190	£145
9ft	10-35g	£195	£149

SALTIST - Spinning Rods

10ft	14-60g	£170	£139
11ft 6in	28-84g	£170	£139

2 PIECES

Whisker Spin - Bass Spinning Rods

Designed to cover the multitude of fishing styles, across lure and bait with monofil or braid

		RRP	NOW
8ft	10-40g		SOLD OUT
9ft	15-50g		SOLD OUT
10ft	20-60g		SOLD OUT

2 PIECES

SHIMANO LURE RODS

S.T.C TRAVEL SPINNING RODS

A travel rod with a transport length of just 58cm, this is a rod you can pack in your suitcase, car, backpack or wherever you want to store it!

			RRP	NOW
9ft	15-40g	5 Piece	£134.99	£99
9ft	20-60g	5 Piece	£149.99	£119
10ft	20-60g	5 Piece	£139.99	£110
2.4/2.7m	3-14g	6 Piece Multi Length	£139.99	£110
2.4/2.7m	15-40g	6 Piece Multi Length	£144.99	£115
2.7/3m	20-60g	6 Piece Multi Length	£159.99	£129

LUNAMIS BASS RODS

8ft 6in	6-25g, 7-35g	2 Piece	£329.99
9ft	5-21g, 6-25g	2 Piece	£329.99
9ft 6in	7-35g, 10-45g	2 Piece	£349.99

BASSTERRA BASS RODS

7ft 2in LRF	1-11g	2 Piece	SOLD OUT
8ft LRF	3-15g	2 Piece	SOLD OUT
8ft	6-28g	2 Piece	£59.99
9ft	7-30g, 12-38g	2 Piece	£69.99
9ft 6in	15-60g	2 Piece	£69.99

DAIWA SALTWATER LURE REELS

BG	BG MAGSEALED	20 BG MQ	20 SALTIGA (G)
Fixed Spool Reels	Spinning Reels	Fixed Spool Reels	Fixed Spool Reels
7 Models	7 Models	10 Models	9 Models
from **£119**	from **£139**	from **£169**	from **£799**

• 5 Models
22 EXIST
Is this the BEST spinning reel ever made!
RRP £850-£900
from **£699**

SHIMANO SALTWATER LURE REELS

MIRAVEL	STRADIC C14+	STRADIC FM	
10 MODELS	2 MODELS	16 MODELS	
from **£109.99**	from **SOLD OUT**	from **£189.99**	
SPHEROS SW	SPHEROS SW-A	ULTEGRA FC	SARAGOSA SW-A
3 MODELS	8 MODELS	10 MODELS	8 MODELS
from **£99.99**	from **£164.99**	from **£119.99**	from **£199.99**

DAIWA KENZAKI

"Nothing short of superb"
Sea Angler Review, June 2019

Read the review by **DAVID BARHAM** on our website

Super Kenzaki FS (Fixed Spool) **Boat Rod**

6-12lb, 6-15lb, 12-20lb, 15-25lb, 20-30lb or 30-50lb
7', 7'6" or 8'
RRP £199 **£169.99**

BG Magsealed Spinning Reel
7 Models - RRP £195-£245 from **£139**

A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

SHIMANO SALTWATER LURE REELS

VANFORD	VANQUISH	STELLA FK	
13 MODELS	11 MODELS	14 MODELS	
from **£179.99**	from **£399.99**	from **£539.99**	
TWIN POWER FD	TWIN POWER XD	TWIN POWER SW-C	STELLA SW-C
11 MODELS	6 MODELS	11 MODELS	14 MODELS
from **£299**	from **£349**	from **£399.99**	from **£729.99**

DOUGLAS SKY G

S6904 SALTWATER FLY ROD

Altogether, you'll find the Douglas SKY G Fly Rod Series offers superb dampening and recovery, near-effortless casting, accuracy, and outstanding durability. Innovative top-of-the-line components include: REC Titanium Cerecoil stripper guides with zirconia inserts, REC Titanium recoil guides, AAAA flor grade cork, a skeletonized aluminum reel seat, double uplocking rings with nylon bushings, and burled blackwood inserts. Includes a plush rod sock and aluminum tube.

Yellowstone Angler's WINNER of BEST 9ft weight 6 rod

- Length: 9'0ft
- Line Weight: 6
- Action: Fast
- Sections: 4
- Weight: 93gram

9ft: #6 Saltwater **£849.99**

DOUGLAS SKY G

S8904 SALTWATER FLY ROD

Altogether, you'll find the Douglas SKY G Fly Rod Series offers superb dampening and recovery, near-effortless casting, accuracy, and outstanding durability. Innovative top-of-the-line components include: REC Titanium Cerecoil stripper guides with zirconia inserts, REC Titanium recoil guides, AAAA flor grade cork, a skeletonized aluminum reel seat, double uplocking rings with nylon bushings, and burled blackwood inserts. Includes a plush rod sock and aluminum tube.

8wt Shootout done by FIELD & STREAM **WINNER** DOUGLAS SKY G 8904 9ft #8

- Length: 9'0ft
- Line Weight: 8
- Action: Fast
- Sections: 4
- Weight: 102gram
- Saltwater friendly hard wear

9ft: #8 Saltwater **£849.99**
Also available in #7 #9 #10

G.Loomis SALTWATER FLY

UK APPOINTED DEALER

ASQUITH

Built on Shimano's proprietary Spiral X platform, the Asquith boasts superb power transfer from tip to hand, quick recovery, and increased sensitivity.

ASQ 890	9ft	#7 #8	4 Piece	£899.99
ASQ 1090	9ft	#9 #10	4 Piece	£899.99
ASQ 1290	9ft	#11 #12	4 Piece	£999.99

NRX+

Empowers anglers with confidence-boosting control in less-than-ideal situations.

NRX+ S 790 / 890 / 990	9ft	#7 #8 #9	4 Piece..£799.99
NRX+ S 1090	9ft	#10	4 Piece..£799.99
NRX+ S 1290	9ft	#12	4 Piece..£799.99
NRX+ 10810-2	8ft 10"	#10	2 Piece..£799.99
NRX+ 12810-2	8ft 10"	#12	2 Piece..£799.99

G.Loomis SALTWATER FLY RODS

NEW

IMX-PRO S V2 SALTWATER FLY RODS

UK APPOINTED DEALER

MULTI TAPER

Rolled for pumped performance in salty environments, IMX-PRO V2S actions are tuned for utility in three specific areas: improved tracking in the wind, lifting generous lengths of line before a re-cast, and fish fighting control. G. Loomis engineers designed these versatile actions with gobs of power through the bottom half of the rod but, most uniquely, developed a slightly tighter tip to minimize tailing loops and improve tracking and line pick-up. A proprietary blend of technologies - Conduit Core and GL7 resin system - provides surplus strength and impact resistance without the extra weight, creating a blank that allows anglers to stay frosty when a "send" becomes a "bend."

9ft #6	4 Piece	£399.99	
9ft #7	4 Piece	£399.99	9ft #10 4 Piece..£399.99
9ft #8	4 Piece	£399.99	9ft #11 4 Piece..£399.99
9ft #9	4 Piece	£399.99	9ft #12 4 Piece..£399.99

Snowbee SALTWATER RODS & REELS

SPECTRE RMX SALTWATER 4PCE
With the ever increasing popularity of Saltwater Bass, Bonefish, Carp & Pike fly fishing, the "Saltwater Predator" model is top of the Spectre range.
RRP £259 **£139**

PRESTIGE G-XS SW SALTWATER
The most powerful in the saltwater series, yet still deceptively light and easy to cast.
9ft #7 - 4 Piece
RRP £559 **£399**
Also available in #8 & #10

XS FLY REELS
The first choice for the best of saltwater Bonefish, Jacks, Permit and smaller Tarpon, or Bass & Pollock.
#7/9 #9/11 - **from £199**

SPECTRE FLY REELS
Ultra-lightweight, precision CNC machined aluminium reels for a better rod/reel balance
#9/10 #10/11
SOLD OUT

Scott Sector SALTWATER FLY RODS

Scott Fly Rod Company introduces the all new Sector series of high performance, hand crafted saltwater fly rods.

Sector rods advance on Scott's award-winning Meridian series to bring you a new level of performance and reliability in saltwater fly rods.

IFTD WINNER BEST SALTWATER ROD

£999

8ft 4in	#10 #13 #15	3 Piece
8ft 4in	#6 #8	4 Piece
8ft 10in	#7 #8 #9 #10 #11 #12	2 Piece
9ft	#6 #7 #8 #9 #10 #11 #12	4 Piece

Sector 'NZ SPECIAL'

The Sector New Zealand Special has been developed specifically for chucking everything required to catch trout in gin-clear water and crammed conditions - whether it be nymph rigs, big dry flies - or even streamers. A tireless allrounder!

9ft #6 4 Piece **£999**

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G·Loomis
BASS LURE RODS
UK APPOINTED DEALER
IMX-PRO MAG BASS CASTING RODS
Bass casting rods designed for anglers that prefer the "Classic" Mag Bass actions. Full cork grips and fuji reel seats with Fuji K-frame guides provide positive grip and balance along with positive control. Incredible performance means extreme sensitivity, ultra-light weight, excellent balance and unbelievable power and strength!
IMX Pro Mag Bass 6ft 6in 7-18g 1 Piece....£289.99
IMX Pro Mag Bass 6ft 6in 7-21g 1 Piece....£289.99
IMX-PRO BASS SPINNING JIG RODS
Bass spinning rods designed for anglers that prefer the "Classic" Spin Jig actions. Full cork grips and fuji reel seats with Fuji K-frame guides provide positive grip and balance along with positive control. Incredible performance means extreme sensitivity, ultra-light weight, excellent balance and unbelievable power and strength!
IMX Pro Mag Bass 6ft 2-9g 1 Piece....£289.99
IMX Pro Mag Bass 7ft 4-10g 1 Piece....£289.99

G·Loomis
LURE RODS
2023 WINNER
BASSMASTER CLASSIC
E6X WALLEYE UNIVERSAL SPINNING
Easy loading, easy casting for fishing virtually any size baits/rigs
7ft 6in 2-9g 2 Piece.....£169
IMX HOTSHOT
Surprising power in such a small package, very sensitive and lightweight.
7ft 6in 7-14g 2 Piece...£199
IMX STEELHEAD SIDE DRIFT
Soft and sensitive enough to allow you to react before they drop the bair.
8ft 8in 2-14g 2 Piece..£219
E6X INSHORE SPINNING
Multi-taper technology reduces weight, increases sensitivity.
7ft 8-17lb 1 Piece..£139
7ft 6in 8-14lb 1 Piece..£139
7ft 6in 8-17lb 1 Piece..£139
GLS NRX+ JIG & WORM SPINNING
NEW
Jeff Gustafson's wins the 2023 Bassmaster Classic using the NRX+ Jig & Worm 7' 3" - 6-12lb
7ft 3in 6-12lb 1 Piece..£449
WALLEYE GLX JIG
Extra length helps extend casting range and provides more positive hooksets in deep water.
6ft 10in 2-9lb 1 Piece..£299
GLX JIG & WORM CASTING
GLX is still one of the lightest, most sensitive high-performance rods G.Loomis make.
7ft 1in 8-21lb 1 Piece..£289
TROUT GLX SPINNING
Specialized series of spinning rods for trout fishing. Effective for lake or stream fishing
7ft 3in 6-12lb 1 Piece..£449
IMX-PRO BLUE SPINNING
Precise actions that strike a perfect balance between durability and performance.
6ft 8in 2-6lb 2 Piece....£299
7ft 2in 4-8lb 2 Piece....£339

WESTIN
W3 SEABASS 2ND GENERATION
NEW FOR 2023
The W3 SeaBass 2nd is a super-fast and long-casting powerhouse that meets the demands of the modern sea bass angler. These rods are packed with power, and due to the premium Torayca® carbon fibers, you still get a true lightweight feeling when fishing, fish, and detecting even the mostcautious bites. Use it from the bank or boat, the W3 SeaBass 2nd will get the job done no matter the situation.
Reel Seat: VSS
D-Ring Hook Keeper
Guides: LTS ring guides
Handle: Premium EVA handle
Reinforced with 1k woven carbon
Blank: Torayca® High Performance Carbon blank
HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
W3 Seabass 2nd generation 2 section with cloth bag
RRP NOW
8ft 4in (250cm) 12.42g.....£149 £129.99
9ft 1in (273cm) 12.42g.....£159 £139.99
10ft (300cm) 12.42g.....£169 £149.99

WESTIN
SEABASS ACCESSORIES
NEW FOR 2023
W6 8 Braided Line 135m - from £24.99
W10 13 Coastal Braided Line - 150m - £46.99
W3 Street Sling Medium - £29.99
W3 Leg Bag Medium - £29.99
W6 Roll-Top Backpack 25L - £69.99
W6 Roll-Top Backpack 40L - £79.99
W6 Dry Pouch 23x13cm - £10.99
W3 Quick Bag Small - £44.99
W3 Lure Loader Small - £59.99
W6 Wading Backpack £124.99
W6 Boat Lurebag Large - £134.99
W3 CR Floating Landing Nets from £24.99
W3 CR Adjustable Landing Net from £39.99
W3 Street Bag Pro Medium - £54.99
W3 Lure Loader Large - £59.99
W6 Roll-Top Duffelbag Large - £109.99
W6 Duffel Bag X Large - £149.99
Forceps, Scissors, Pliers, Sheaths etc £8.99-£29.95

SAVAGE GEAR
SALTWATER LURE REELS
SG56
CLEARANCE
Strong, lightweight aluminium body and a carbon reinforced composite rotor, designed to deliver top performance. Features 6+1 sealed steel ball bearings, high- performance carbon drag system and our proprietary Dura Grease - all of which combine to help make the reel saltwater resistant.
5 BB 7 BEARINGS
8 Models available - 4000, 5000, 6000, 8000, 10000, 14000, 14000H, 18000
RRP £154.99-£189.99 NOW £79
SG58
CLEARANCE
A reel with a unique coating that can easily withstood 500 hours of being sprayed with saltwater in testing. This SG58 with SW500 coating, is saltwater resistant. Features sealed 8+1 steel ball bearings, sealed drag system, lightweight and strong aluminium body and Carbon Reinforced Composite rotor.
5 BB 9 BEARINGS
8 Models available - 4000, 5000, 6000, 8000, 10000, 14000, 14000H, 18000
RRP £169.99-£224.99 NOW £99

SAVAGE GEAR
Svendsen teams up with Henry Gilbey & Mads Grosell...
Henry Gilby & Mads Grosell have designed this amazing range of Bass rods, one of the most highly anticipated launches of. Thousands of hours of testing & casting lures from the shore in various conditions have gone into the development of these rods & lures.
Watch the Henry Gilbey Video
SG52 ALL-ROUND RODS - 2 PIECE
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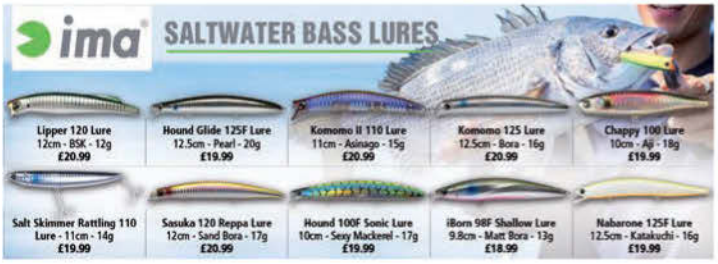
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Words and pictures
DAVE LEWIS

DAVE'S DIARIES

NEW SERIES

STORIES FROM A LIFETIME OF ANGLING

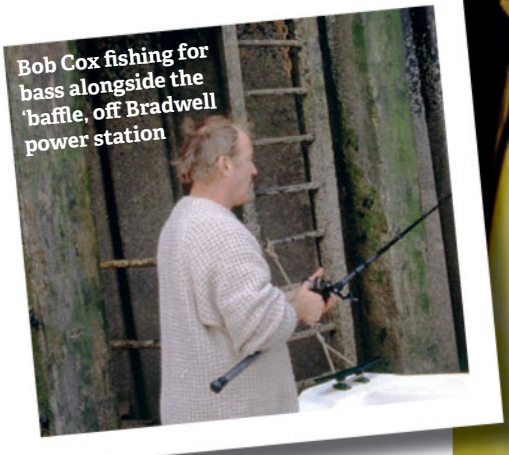
In a new series Dave Lewis tells the untold tales of his angling exploits. This month he recounts the UK & Ireland grand slam of catching and tagging bass in a calendar year

During the 1980s I was hooked on bass fishing. At the time almost all my fishing involved bait, usually peeler crab fished at close range in the gullies and reefs off the Gower coast, or lugworm or razorfish while standing amidst the swash and surge of a lively surf on one of the many wonderful beaches we have located here in South Wales or in the south-west of Ireland. It was inevitable that eventually I became a member of BASS, Bass Anglers Sportfishing Society, serving as vice-president for several years.

Like so many other members of BASS I became actively involved in tagging bass, and it was through this work that I got to meet Graham Pickett. Graham was a marine scientist based at the then MAFF, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food laboratories in Lowestoft, and we quickly became good friends. In addition to countless lengthy phone calls discussing all things bass and bass fishing, we used to meet up to fish and tag bass. Either I'd drive to Essex and we'd fish at Bradwell in the Thames Estuary, along with our mutual friend Bob Cox, or Graham would travel here to fish with me in Wales. Aside from being a committed scientist, Graham was an excellent angler.

THE CHALLENGE

I distinctly remember one phone call. I explained to Graham that the following year I was going to attempt to catch a bass in Wales, England, Ireland and, most ambitiously of all, Scotland. The first three destinations, of course, were entirely achievable, but Scotland? "Not a cat in hell's chance", or words to the same effect, was Graham's reply. Remember, this was back in the days when many anglers still maintained that rarely, if ever, could bass be caught north of a line drawn from Anglesey to the Wash, but I knew this was far from the case.



Bob Cox fishing for bass alongside the 'baffle, off Bradwell power station

Scrabster charter skipper Graham Forbes with school bass caught at Dunnet Bay

Sunset over Fenit Pier, County Kerry

Just recently one of Paul Young's excellent fishing series, 'Hooked on Scotland', had aired on TV. In one episode Paul had fished a magnificent surf beach at Dunnet Bay, which is located in the extreme far north of Scotland, just a few miles away from John O' Groats. Along with a group of local anglers Paul had caught several bass, not big fish, just schoolies of a pound or so, but bass all the same. Immediately this had fired my imagination. Eventually I managed to track down the anglers with whom Paul had fished, and plans were made for me to drive north that summer, where I would attempt to catch, and tag, a Scottish bass. Graham had confirmed that were I to be successful then this would undoubtedly be the most northerly tagged bass ever, and the first bass ever tagged in Scotland. In all likelihood, he had said, I would be the first angler to catch a bass in the four countries of Great Britain and Ireland in the same year.

Unsurprisingly, it was a Welsh fish that I managed to catch first, but what was surprising was that my first bass that year was caught fishing for cod in the middle of a cold snap in January at Stout Point. Catching bass throughout all 12 months of the year is considered normal at many locations these days, but back then such a capture was a rare event, certainly here in South Wales. I was on the board, having caught the first of several dozen Welsh bass that I would go on to catch that year. I had also arranged to fish for bass at several locations in England, but as things turned out, catching an English bass simply fell into my lap. At Easter I travelled down to the South Coast to review a new boat for Orkney, one of the very first cabin cruisers that they had just started to produce. I was told to bring my tackle as we would have the opportunity to spend a few hours fishing at anchor, which I did. It was a fine and settled day and after spending an hour or so running here and there throughout The Solent while attempting to establish the boat's sea keeping qualities, we anchored on the Bramble Bank. I rigged a rod, baited the hook with squid, cast out and almost immediately starting catching dogfish and an occasional ray. But that day I also caught a bass, a very nice one too, that weighed around 8lb. That particular fish was 'harvested', which is the modern way of saying knocked on the head for the table. Throughout that year I caught several other English bass, most of which were tagged but so far as my challenge was concerned, it was two down, two to go.

NORTH OF THE BORDER

That summer I set off on the long drive from Wales to the very tip of Scotland. The trip had been planned to fish off the port of Scrabster, then and now an excellent venue for general reef fishing. Scrabster is located just to the north-west of Thurso, a small village within Dunnet Bay. This was going to be my opportunity to try for an elusive Scottish bass.

Following a hugely successful day fishing in and around Scrabster Head, and the spectacularly rugged Caithness coastline with local charter skipper Graham Forbes, Graham and I met up with a group of local shore anglers for a late evening fishing-into-darkness session at Dunnet Bay where conditions, I was told, were good for bass. The general consensus from other anglers

was that bass could never be relied upon but were often caught at Dunett. I remember being hugely sceptical that I, or indeed any of us, would catch a bass. Given such a short window of opportunity, all I could do was to give it my very best shot. Yet rather than being in any way difficult, catching bass at Dunnet proved to be a formality. Along with good numbers of large flounder we all caught bass; I beached three. All were small schoolies but that didn't matter, they were Scottish bass, all of which were tagged. When Graham heard the news he was delighted, especially when he received the scale samples I had taken, which formed the basis of a lot of new research.

THREE DOWN ONE TO GO

In order to complete my challenge all I now needed was to catch an Irish bass. I say 'all' with tongue in cheek, as the way things turned out that fish proved to be the toughest part of the entire venture. Indeed, I had all but failed, only managing to catch the one bass I required right at the death of my annual trip to fish the classic surf beaches of County Kerry.

That week in Kerry used to be something that I and a small group of bass fishing friends used to look forward to with much anticipation. We visited each year towards the end of September and into early October, the period that traditionally marked the absolute peak of the surf fishing season on the hallowed strands of Brandon Bay and Inch on the Dingle Peninsula. As the Swansea to Cork ferry pitched her way across the Celtic Sea throughout the night, we knew that this year there was going to be no shortage of surf to fish.

The next day as we drove through Inch on the southern flank of the peninsula towards our base near Dingle, it was obvious that we wouldn't be fishing there for at least the next few days. As far as the eye could see a regimented succession of steep rolling swell was pushing landwards out of the Atlantic, each swell curling over and breaking as it entered ever shallower water. The beach was utterly unfishable. No problem, we had

Young Dave Lewis with one of three small bass caught surf fishing at Dunnet Bay in the far north of Scotland

Dave with a small bass caught fishing an Irish surf beach

mused, all that we had to do was to head over the Connor Pass and fish the north coast at Stradbally, Gowlane, Kilcummin or Fermoyal. Which is exactly what we did the following day following a bait digging session filling a bucket with prime lugworm at the Wine Strand in Smerwick Harbour.

From the top of the Connor Pass we were afforded a spectacular view right the way across to Loop Head at the mouth of the Shannon Estuary in County Clare, and as far as the eye could see the ocean was a maelstrom of white caps. The only fishable surf we could see was tucked away near Brandon and the estuary at the western side of the bay, by virtue of the substantial lee afforded by Brandon Head. So that's where we headed and climbed into our chest waders before tackling up and making our first casts of the trip. Almost immediately we realised that we had another problem to deal with: weed.

Weed is the curse of the surf fisher. That said, I regard it as an evil necessity as it is those same waves that have dislodged the vast rafts of kelp and have ripped apart the seabed exposing the multitude of rich pickings that bring the bass inshore to feed. Successfully fishing these surf beaches is all about timing. The optimum times to fish are when the first swells that precede an approaching low pressure system start to push in, and then again as they gradually start to subside as the low moves on. At the peak of the blow most surf beaches will be unfishable.

Having fished throughout County Kerry for several years we were used to dealing with weed, but whereas in most years a drive to another section of the breach, perhaps as close as a quarter of a mile away, would find clear, fishable water, this year this was not the case. The blow we were currently experiencing was just the latest of a succession of powerful storms that had lashed the west of Ireland during the previous weeks, with the result that everywhere we tried was full of weed. To make matters worse we were hammered by torrential rain almost all day, every day.

Each evening over pints of Guinness in the pub we would wait anxiously for the latest weather report that followed the news, but we found no cause for hope. No sooner than this storm had moved on the next, and then yet another were lining up waiting to move landwards.

In the end we just had to face facts that this was not going to be a good year. Each day we fished where and when we could, Ventry, Dingle Harbour, a few marks within the vast estuary at Castlemaine behind Inch, along with a few sheltered rock marks, and we caught dogfish, rays, strap conger, wrasse, pollack and a few flounder, but nowhere could we catch the elusive bass that I needed to complete my challenge.

On the last full day of our week we headed back over the Conor Pass then east to Tralee, where we took the coast road out to Fenit. Fenit and its famous stone pier is the default venue when everywhere in the area else fails. It's a venue that can be fished in pretty much any weather, with the added bonus that when it's raining you can sit and watch your rod tips from the sanctuary of your car, or walk to the pub. Fenit Pier produces several species of ray, dogfish of course, along with an outside chance of hooking a monkfish or skate. Small pollack and a multitude of mini species can also be caught.

From my experience Fenit Pier was not a venue that was in any way noted for producing bass, but when I lowered a small live pouting almost directly down the inner wall of the pier that is exactly what I caught. Talk about being lucky! Right at the death, within an hour of when we were due to pack up, I had caught my Irish bass, a plump four pounder that was tagged and released. I'd achieved my target, I had caught bass in Wales, England, Scotland and now Ireland, all in the same calendar year. ■

Words and pictures
DAVE LEWIS

BIG GAME ON A BUDGET

Dave Lewis explains why Morocco's world class marlin fishing, low cost, and easy accessibility make it a must-visit destination for UK anglers looking for affordable, short-haul, 'blue water' fishing

I'm lying in the warm cocoon of my comfortable bed. It's totally dark inside my hotel room and through half closed eyes I can see through a narrow gap in the curtains that in the wider world outside, dawn has started to announce itself. After my late arrival the previous evening it's a great temptation to roll over and drop back off to sleep, then suddenly a loud and unfamiliar noise snaps me fully awake. It's the call of the Muezzin summoning the Islamic faithful to observe the 'Fajr', the first of the five 'Namaz' or daily prayers. His heavily accented voice resonates through speakers mounted around the beautifully ornate Minaret atop one of the mosques of Mohammedia. Good morning Morocco: time to get up and go fishing!

WHITE MARLIN MECCA

It's no great secret that there is exceptional blue water sport fishing available off the coast of north west Africa in general, and Morocco in particular. Current IGFA line class records for white marlin in the men's 2lb, 4lb and 6lb class, along with the women's 6lb class, are all held with fish caught off Mohammedia. The records tally for white marlin caught fly fishing here is even more impressive, and includes the men's 4lb, 6lb, 8lb, 12lb, 16lb and 20lb tippet.

Mohammedia is not your typical sport fishing marina. Here, you can't just wander in and stroll the berthing pontoons, stopping to talk with the captains and mates as you can at countless other sport fishing establishments located around the world.

If you want to go fishing here, step one is for your captain to register you at the 'Yacht Club Du Maroc'. Next you need to present your passport or another accepted form of identification, I used my UK driver license, to the security guards at the entrance to the port. This will be retained and in return you'll be given a day pass, which you need to keep safely and exchange for your ID when you exit at the end of the day. This might sound like a somewhat problematic and time-consuming process but I assure you it is not. Throughout my trip the entire procedure took just a minute or two, which I was assured was absolutely normal.

Once you pass through port security you enter what you soon realise is a vast industrial complex. Mohammedia is the most important oil port in the region, with the majority of the port real estate being taken over by docks occupied by large oil tankers, vast storage tanks, along with the assorted clutter and paraphernalia associated with the production and distribution of petroleum. A small corner of the main harbour has

been allocated to the local fleet of commercial fishing boats, and tucked away on a couple of pontoons close by is where you'll find the local sport fishing community.

Most sea anglers I talk with who have never actually fished for marlin have a very negative view of the sport. Their impression of marlin fishing involves day after day of endless hours trolling under a hot tropical sun, while waiting for a fish to snag itself on a lure. For this experience they will pay a considerable amount of money involving a long-haul trip to a destination on the other side of the world, invariably for little or any reward. Any fish that are hooked are cranked in on the heaviest tackle, usually by an angler strapped in a chair. In many cases they would be right! However, this is not in anyway an accurate picture of marlin fishing in Morocco.

As we will see, anglers here fish light and incredibly sporting tackle; tackle with which they actually hook the fish themselves. Provided you fish at the right time of the year, your chances of success are high, very high. Blank days in this fishery are rare, while catches of up to half a dozen, or even double digit days, are commonplace during peak season.

Cost wise Morocco is surprisingly affordable. Casablanca is accessed via direct four-hour flights from the UK and accommodation at Mohammedia is on a par with Spain. The cost of boats is also within the budget of many anglers: a day fishing for marlin here costing no more than a day fishing for sharks or tuna in the UK or Ireland. Morocco is the perfect destination for a short two or three-day fishing trip.

On my first morning fishing here we soon cleared the harbour breakwater and left dockland behind us. We headed out into the open Atlantic, stopping briefly to drift alongside one of several large buoys marking the deep-water channel into the harbour. There we jigged Sabiki rigs, quickly filling the livebait tank with the prime mackerel baits that the white marlin we would be targeting find so irresistible.

SEASONAL

One thing visiting anglers need to appreciate is that unlike many areas where billfish are caught, Mohammedia is not a mixed fishery. In season you can expect to catch a lot of white marlin along with a few blues, and occasionally some dorado, and that's pretty much it. The marlin season starts in July, and it is during the early part of the season when anglers experience the most action with blues, but there's always a chance of an early white. Prime time for whites is a relatively short period consisting of just two months: August and September. In some years the first half of October can be productive.

My trip was during the first week of September and I had been greeted by the welcome news that the fishing throughout the previous week had been very good. "During our last six days fishing we have released 52 whites averaging 60-100lb plus," our Italian born Captain, Marco Canu, informed me.

The most productive area is located 20-30 miles north west of Mohammedia where the depth varies from 400-650ft, and the skyline of Morocco's capital city, Rabat, is clearly visible. As soon as we arrived Marco eased back to a trolling speed of around 6-7 knots, while the crew set about deploying a spread of three teasers running about 20-30ft back; none of which were rigged with hooks.

This is a bait n' switch fishery where the usually aggressive whites are 'teased' before being first presented with a rigged dead bait, usually a mackerel, sardine or mullet. A livebait is always rigged ready, swimming in an aerated bucket in the cockpit. This is deployed if a raised fish refuses to take the dead bait; live baits are hardly ever refused. All baits are rigged on circle hooks, and they are always ready to be deployed the instant a fish is raised. The boat is equipped with 20lb class conventional rigs for whites, plus two 30lb spin outfits, just in case a blue enters the spread.

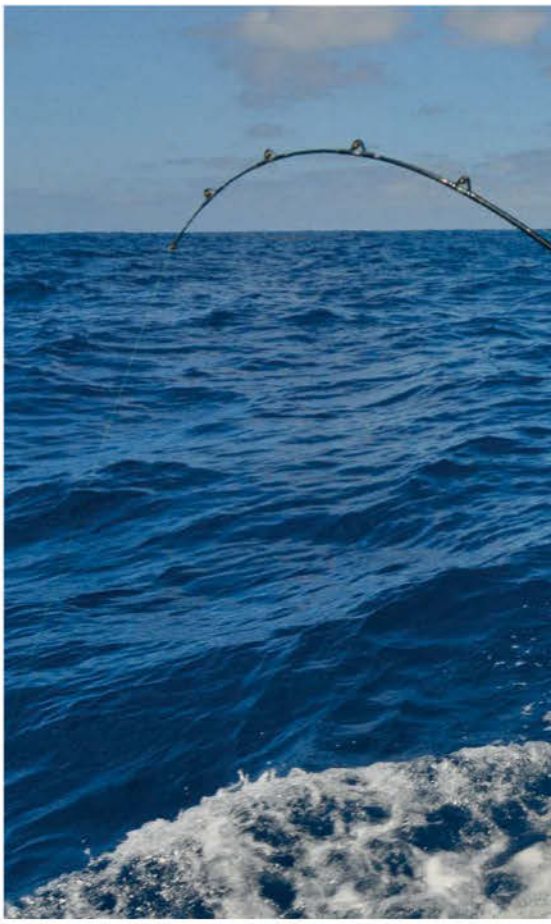
READY TO REACT

To be successful in these waters you need to be fast and efficient, ready to react as soon as a fish appears. If you're lying down half asleep you're not going to be in a position to react fast enough, which will cost you fish. White marlin are very aggressive but they are not stupid, and at times can be finicky to hook. As soon as a fish enters the spread the faster you can get a bait in front of it the greater your chance of success. As soon as the bait is pitched the angler should hold the rod as high as possible, which keeps the bait skipping at the surface with the minimum amount of line in the water. It's an exciting, sporting way to fish!

The fishing throughout my first day was slow. It appeared that the arrival overnight of a ground swell had resulted in a mixing of the warmer layer of water at the surface with much cooler water from deeper down. Throughout that first morning the water temperature remained at 'chilly' 20-21 degrees, stubbornly staying below the optimum of 22 degrees. We did raise a couple of whites but they never really showed any interest in our baits, and soon faded away. By mid-afternoon the warming effect of a hot African sun had worked its magic, and the surface temperature hit the mark.

Suddenly, excited cries from the flybridge alerted everyone that we had raised a fish. Looking back at our teasers I spotted a lively white darting from one teaser to the next, its rounded pectoral fins glowing a brilliant lilac blue. Within seconds Kim Hermanowski had pitched a bait and was holding the rod exactly as she had been advised. That fish absolutely crushed the bait. As it did, Kim dropped the rod tip low to give the fish time to turn and swallow the bait, and for the circle hook to work its magic. Everything went perfectly to plan, and barely ten minutes later we released our first white marlin of the trip.

Radio chatter throughout the day had confirmed that the other boats fishing in our



vicinity had all experienced a similarly slow day. But back at the dock we learned that the crew of Sahyoun's other boat, 'Double Strike', had released six whites from 11 bites. They had been fishing an area further to the south than we had where they had found more favourable surface temperatures throughout the day.

After a slow couple of hours, which once again we put down to a slightly less than ideal surface water temperature, we started to raise a few fish. Eventually Zac Smith got the opportunity to execute a textbook pitch, and hooked up with a lively fish that demonstrated perfectly just why whites have a reputation for putting on a show on light tackle. That was our only fish on day two.

Thankfully conditions the next morning were perfect. The swell has started to ease and as we completed our morning chore of acquiring fresh live baits. Confidence aboard 'One More' was riding high and sure enough when we commenced trolling it wasn't long before the first white rushed our spread and succumbed to a pitched mackerel. Ten minutes later it swam off wearing a tag, no doubt wondering to itself what the hell just happened. Soon afterwards we hooked another fish, and when yet another white joined it to see what was going on, we got a double hook up and release.

It was a fantastic day with plenty of action, during which we released eight fish from perhaps a dozen bites. The average size of those fish we released was a healthy 75lb, with the biggest clearly going way over 100lb. As Moroccan marlin fishing goes we had barely experienced an average day out on the water, which is why I intend revisiting at the earliest possible opportunity.

Located 45 minutes drive north from Casablanca's international airport, Mohammedia is One More Sport Fishing's main base in Morocco. They operate two charter boats, the Gamefisher 40 'One More' I fished aboard, and a Grady White Canyon 30, 'Double Strike'. Both boats have hugely experienced crew and are fully equipped with a comprehensive selection of high-quality tackle in various line classes. Targeting line class records, especially on fly, is not only a specialty, but a passion of these crews.

HOW TO BOOK

Trips to Mohammedia fishing with One More Sport Fishing can be booked in the UK through Spoilt For Choice Travel. For more information visit: www.sfctravel.com. Mohammedia, and Morocco in general, is a shining example to the world of how communities from different backgrounds can live together side by side in perfect harmony.

In the centre of this pleasant and well laid out town you'll find a Christian church located all but alongside mosques. The atmosphere is relaxed and safe. Each morning you will be picked up at your hotel and driven to the port, then returned at the end of the day. English is widely spoken everywhere, along with Arabic and French. Having travelled extensively throughout Africa and the Arab world I can say that Morocco is certainly one of the most welcoming countries in the region I have visited.

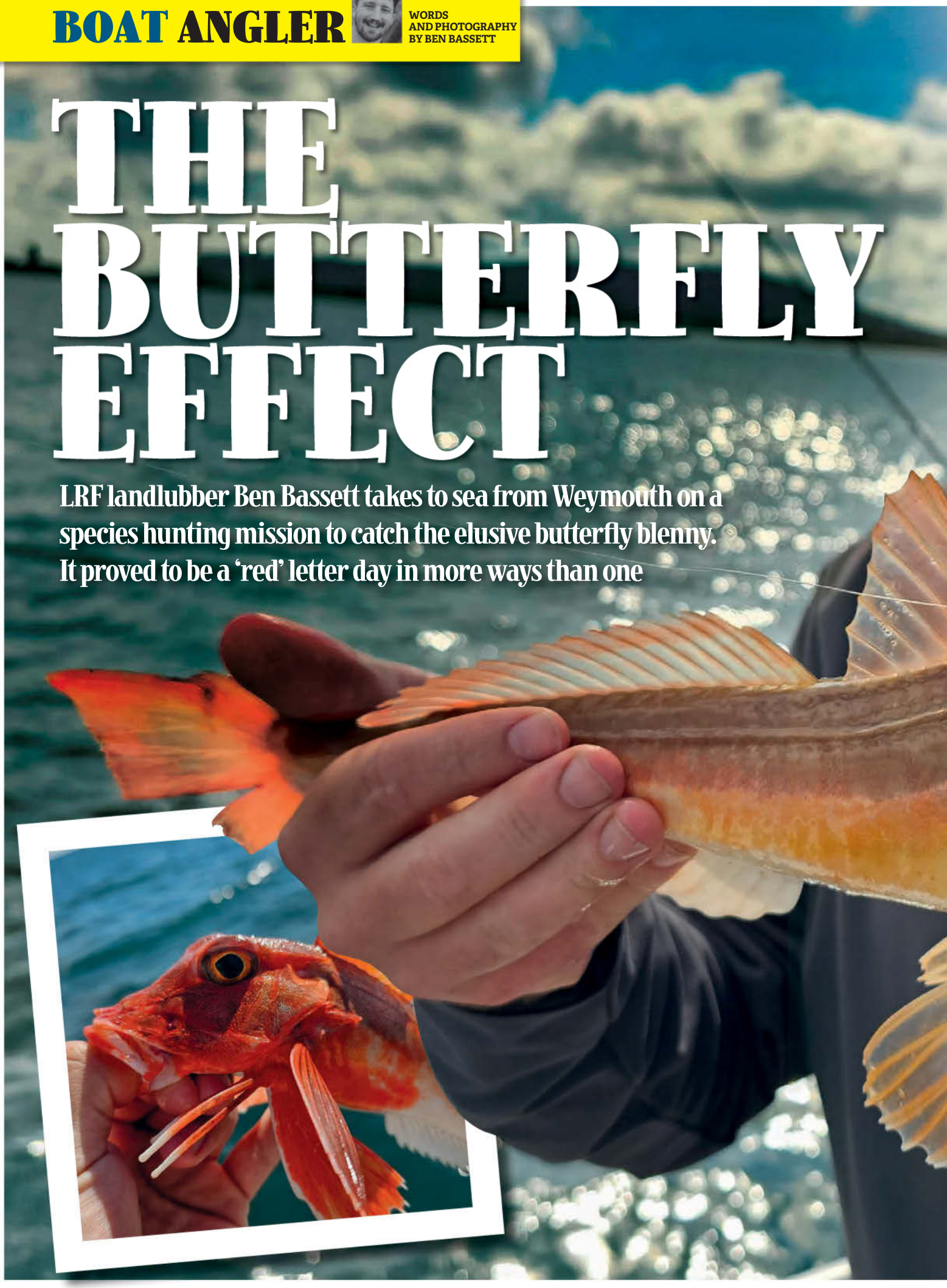
Direct flights into Casablanca are available from several UK airports, with a flight time from London of under three hours. Aside from great fishing Morocco is rich in tourist attractions, and is well worth a visit. At Mohammedia you'll find a range of good hotels. I stayed at the Ibis which provided excellent value for money.

For me the big surprise was the variety and quality of eating options in town, which range from excellent street food to fine dining. The food everywhere we ate, including lunch aboard the boat each day, was nothing short of excellent. Make sure you sample either a lamb, or better still a goat Tagine, just one of the incredibly flavoursome local specialities you'll find throughout Morocco. ■

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BEN BASSETT

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

LRF landlubber Ben Bassett takes to sea from Weymouth on a species hunting mission to catch the elusive butterfly blenny. It proved to be a 'red' letter day in more ways than one



I could feel the jig hit the mud with a gentle thud. It had descended over 40ft having been cast downtide from the boat. It took only two sweeps of the rod tip before I met resistance. A fish was on; down in the deep and line ticked off the reel, not in bursts but in awkward, twisting lunges. This couldn't be, could it? I steadily pulled up the fish from the depths and there, in the dark blue, were flashes of red.

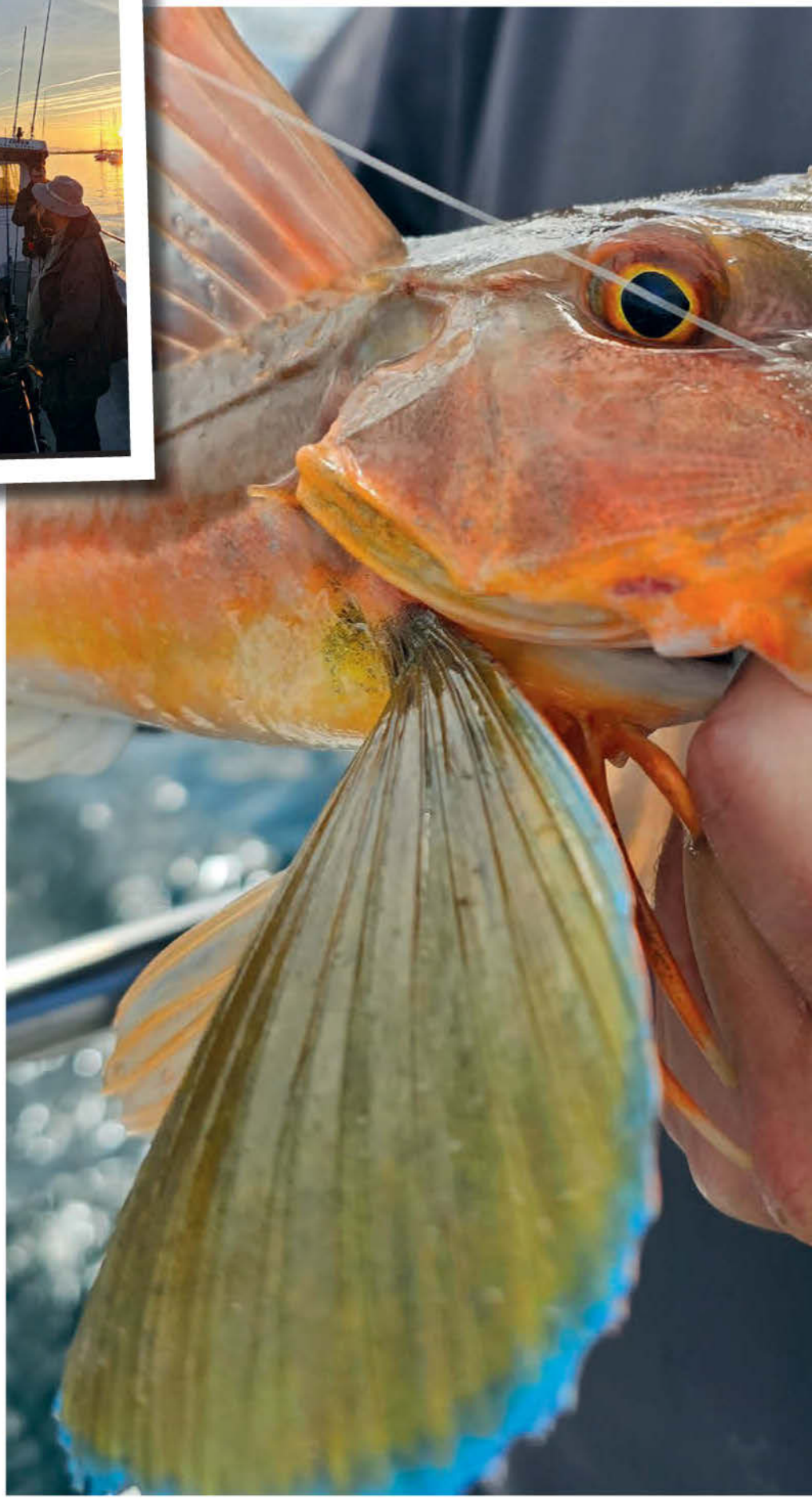
I'm no boat angler, in fact I have been on a charter boat fewer than five times in my life. I have always appreciated the accessibility and adventure of the shoreline and nurtured my angling obsession there. Despite my land-lubbing ways I was invited to join a species hunting boat trip, specifically aimed at one unusual species, chartered by wildlife cameraman Jack Perks, and skippered by Colin Penny on Flamer IV out of Weymouth, Dorset. I made the two-hour journey from Plymouth, with a 3:30am alarm, and was soon on the boat with my fishing mates for the day.

I was joining Jack, prolific angling writer and species enthusiast Mark Everard, Scottish species hunting legend Scott Hutchinson, Big Lerf event regulars Tom Stafford and Tim Brewer, and Jon Cranfield with his brother Stephen. As we prepared our tackle for the day ahead, we were blessed with clear blue skies and a gorgeous rising sun coating every surface with a deep shade of orange. I know Weymouth well and it felt strange leaving the LRF paradise of the inner harbour and then both the pleasure and stone piers behind. Despite this, there was a real buzz of excitement on the boat as all of us set up our light-as-we-dare rigs.

SOLID TIP SUBTLETY

I was using my Majorcraft N-One Aji solid tipped rod, rated to cast 12g maximum, coupled with my Daiwa Ninja 2500 reel loaded with Majorcraft Dangan 12lb braid. Considering onshore I use lines as light as 1.5lb breaking strain, this was heavy stuff for me. It is well known that most rods can comfortably handle at least double their casting weight if just dropped vertically from a boat, and I was relying on that fact so I could still make the most of the sensitivity of the solid tip. Our target was small that day, and I needed all the subtlety I could get away with.

My wish to be subtle wouldn't change the fact we would be fishing in deep water with tide and current to contend with; a 5g or 7g dropshot weight just wouldn't cut it. So, onto a double snooded dropshot rig, with size 12 hooks, went a 1oz weight. This way I felt I could keep in contact without anchoring my lure to the bottom with weights that could damage my prized rod.



EYES ON THE PRIZE

I was determined to keep to lures and artificial baits, as even offshore I had to stick to my principles. Luckily enough, the bait imitations we have now, such as Berkley Gulp Isome, are so close to the real thing that I was sure I wouldn't be at a huge disadvantage. A couple of my boatmates for the day felt the same, but the rest were using bait – Scott, Jack and Mark had no problem using the real stuff, as they had their eyes fixed firmly on the prize.

That prize would hopefully be the butterfly blenny. We don't know if anyone has ever chartered a boat before just to catch a blenny, but the species was a special one. Butterfly blennies are almost never found in shallow water like their cousins the tompot, common, and Montagus. They prefer deeper water, normally over mud with lots of cover like discarded shells or even glass bottles. Butterflies don't grow very big, most being around 10cm, but have an incredibly large dorsal fin which gives the species its name.

Jack needed good photos of the butterfly for an upcoming project, so our aim was to collaboratively land one or two for him. He had chosen Flamer IV because skipper Colin knew a spot where they could be and was confident we would be successful. With that we put our trust in his vast knowledge of the area.

ROUGH GROUND WRASSING

We arrived at our first drop, which was close by to a man-made structure not far out of Weymouth. This was shallow and snaggy ground, perfect for wrasse, and it didn't take long to find them. Mark, using ragworm, kicked things off with a solid ballan wrasse and just kept on catching, ending up with corkwings, goldsinny and the highly prized baillons wrasse. My Gulp Isome was clearly attractive too and my first

"In less than half an hour we had collectively caught five species of wrasse, including the beautiful and dainty rockcook. We only needed the cuckoo variety to turn up to complete the wrasse grand slam"

few drops included corkwing and pollack in regular numbers. We were drifting over the sunken boulders and weed beds, making for moments of frantic action, then it quietened down when Colin put us back in position. It was the sort of ground that I thrive in if found from the shore, and it was the early wake-up call we needed, lifting our spirits even higher as we all caught plenty.

In less than half an hour we had collectively caught five species of wrasse, including the beautiful and dainty rockcook. We only needed the cuckoo variety to turn up to complete the wrasse grand slam. The wrasse were as beautiful as they were powerful, and many subtle bites turned into drag-burning runs from medium sized ballan wrasse, the largest and most well-known of our wrasse species. My largest gave me the run-around in the rocks before surfacing. It was a more subdued colour, brown and cream, but with its scales reflecting gold in the early morning sunlight, I could truly appreciate its beauty.

It wasn't all wrasse though, as pout, pollack, black gobies and a relative to our intended target, the tompot blenny, all made an appearance building up our species count nicely early on. Our next drift was over cleaner ground in the hope of a very different species, and one I was hoping to encounter at some point during the day. Colin informed us that over the mud bank we are slowly drifting, there was a chance of the bizarre red bandfish. This species is an eel-like fish that lives in burrows it constructs in mud or sand. An almost impossible fish to catch from the shore, I had high hopes I could catch one that day.

Knowing that the next bite could be a red bandfish made every nibble on the lures extra exciting. Unfortunately, it wasn't to be at that spot, but the occasional large ballan

wrasse kept the boat engaged, including more fine fish falling to the ragworm used by Mark and Jack. With blue skies, wispy cloud and regular bites, we were all feeling confident as we approached the butterfly mark.

Colin explained we were fishing over sunken boulders that gave way to mud and sand, and over that cleaner ground we would hopefully find the blennies. The tide was stronger here, so the drift was quicker. We began a regular cycle of positioning the boat up-tide, fishing our way across the grounds, then repeating. It made for some really interesting fishing: the first wave of bites would be wrasse or pout heavy, then as we drifted over the clean ground the bites were slower but more exciting because of the chance of our target species.

Amongst the rocks at the start of the drift were plenty of baillons wrasse, including a large, paler individual caught by Mark. Baillons are very similar looking to a female corkwing wrasse but they have pink coloured fins and a defined black spot two-thirds down their dorsal fin. Their cheeks have fewer swirls than corkies but are a similar electric blue. The species can be very localised on shore marks, being quite common in some areas and completely absent from most. I had never caught one, something I was very aware of as Mark pulled up one after the other. Thankfully, on the third drift, I got a solid rattle and struck to find a small wrasse on the bottom hook, it was a baillons and, not for the first time in my life, a tiny fish brought a huge smile to my face.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

We had been fishing for less than two hours but so much had happened that we could barely believe it wasn't even 9am. We were in the hotspot as Colin called it, and Jack was getting exciting tiny bites. He struck and the lack of fight gave us hope, this was a small fish but what would it be? We all cheered as he pulled a tiny blenny out of the water and it was our target species, the butterfly blenny. We all then laughed as the small, but very angry, fish latched onto his finger as he unhooked it. Butterflies clearly have no fear and it took a bit of effort to remove the vicious fish without harming either the bitten or the biter.

Jack had a tank set up with an aerator so he could keep the fish in good condition for photos later on. This gave us plenty of ▶

"Thankfully, on the third drift, I got a solid rattle and struck to find a small wrasse on the bottom hook, it was a baillons and, not for the first time in my life, a tiny fish brought a huge smile to my face"

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opportunity to appreciate the finer details of the species. The large dorsal had a black eye-like marking, clearly meant to imitate a larger predator and scare away other dangerous species. It also had two long tubercles above its eyes, looking like the eyebrows of a cantankerous old man. The colours were muted, with bands of brown over lighter brown and shades of orange. It was a distinctive blenny, one that wouldn't easily be confused with its related species.

Butterflies clearly like bait, as more were caught by Mark and Scott using small pieces of ragworm. I knew how important the species would be to Scott who had made the trip down from Scotland to fish with us. I made sure I took some close up photos of him with his. Posing with a fish that is little more than five inches long sums up the madness and joy in species hunting; those of us who do it are all a bit weird, but our appreciation for the smaller fish species is unrivalled.

Although some new species did appear as we continued, including black bream and a lovely smoothhound pup for Scott, drift after drift I couldn't find anything other than pout, black gobies or wrasse. Fishing so light did put me at a disadvantage targeting the blennies, as I couldn't keep my lure still long enough for one to hook up. I was still in good spirits though as we decided to move to a new spot, renewing our focus on the red bandfish.

We were now fishing in around 40ft of water but as we were out of the main tidal force, the drift would be slower and the advantage would once again be achieved by going light. My 1oz weight stayed on, along with the doubled snooded dropshot. My technique was to simply, and gently, flick the set up away from the boat, let it settle on the bottom, then try and keep in contact as the vessel floated over my lures. I would then retrieve if I didn't get a bite and repeat. This constant, but steady, movement suited my approach.

Tom was the first to catch, excitedly pulling up the first red bandfish many of us had ever seen in the flesh. I didn't have much time to appreciate the creature as my sensitive rod tip pulled over. The fight was awkward and wriggly, nothing like the wrasse and pout we had been catching only minutes before. I had high hopes this was the one I was looking for as I peered through the water column, illuminated by the swirling rays of sunlight. Then, almost appearing out of nowhere, was my prize: the bright red, sinewy body of a red bandfish.

What an animal, I gripped it as gently as I could in a lip grip as it was unhooked. The mouth opened wide with hundreds of tiny needle-like teeth. The eyes were a deep shade of red which nearly matched the chevron marked long and thin body. I had heard that the tips of the fins were bordered with an extraordinary purple and that was true. It was a shade I had never seen in nature, a true technicolour marvel. I released the fish as quickly as I could after a few photos, having read that this species can be delicate. Seeing the unusual fish snake its way back into the depths was almost as good as catching it.

I could have packed up there and then and been satisfied, but we had plenty of time left. More drifts were repeated in hope of catching more, and I managed to land another. We also started to see tub gurnard falling to anglers on the boat, but the fishing was slower. As the catches dried up, Colin offered another spot where we could fish at anchor. With his talk of bream, gurnard and small shark species, we decided to give that a go. We were soon motoring out to sea, with the creamy white cliffs of the Jurassic coast in view.

ANCHORED UP

The next spot was deeper and at anchor would be unfishable with just an ounce weight, so I went up to two. The tide wasn't yet running at full pelt so I still had a chance with the light gear. I did scale up my baits though. Using a Berkley Gulp Baby Sardine on the top hook and a full Gulp Isome XL worm on the bottom. Within a couple of drops I swiftly found out that black bream loved the worm. The rod tip was rattling almost constantly, and I was able to enjoy the superb fighting ability of the hand sized bream in deep water. They are a species I have caught plenty of from the shore, but normally only very young fish. These larger individuals packed a proper punch for their size.

There was another red species that I was really hoping to take my lure, especially as I had already caught its grey and tub cousins from the shore. The red gurnard is regarded as a common catch from boats, so my hopes were high we would see a few, especially as Jack had lost one earlier at the surface. My next bite felt like another bream, and as I brought it up the excellent fight made me sure it wasn't anything new; but then, once again there was a deep flash of red in the blue. I blurted out a few happy expletives and landed my first ever red gurnard.

Like the red bandfish, the red gurnard's colours almost don't make sense. It is well known that the red spectrum of light disappears in deep water, so why does the species look like it has been dipped in vivid claret paint? Amazingly, it is because red disappears in deep water that these incredible looking species are these beautiful shades. In the depths, the red pigment appears black, thereby giving the fish a form of camouflage. Out in the air though, those reds make the gurnard and bandfish look almost obnoxious with their brightness, and as you can probably tell, I was very happy to have caught both.

For the others on the boat we had more excellent captures, Jon continuing the red theme with a beautiful striped red mullet, plus a good number of dogfish and even a baby tope for Jack, who was having a good run of form. We carried on until the increasing tide made fishing light impossible

and decided to give the previous spots another go before we finished for the day.

After one more butterfly blenny, black bream, cuckoo wrasse, smoothhound, pout, the odd mackerel and plenty of scad, we moved to the red bandfish grounds. Having already caught two, I decided to mix things up and try a metal jig. Tom agreed he wanted to mix things up too and put on a large Dam Ezznet Minnow soft plastic paddletail. We were both aiming for a tub gurnard.

I had tried a few different metals and finally settled on a Majorcraft Jigpara Micro Slim 15g in UV Shirasu. In order to fish such a relatively small jig in deeper water near the bottom, I had to cast downtide so the boat would drift towards the lure, giving me the slack line I needed to work the jig off the mud.

Before I had even begun, though, Tom had a brutal take on the big paddletail. His rod arched over and we all called the powerful fish as a bass. In deep water and with the tide on its side, the fish was able to really pull. The longer the fight went on the more intrigued we all were. Finally, Tom had it beat and to our surprise it wasn't the silver fish we expected, instead we saw more red, but this time the red-orange flanks of a fine tub gurnard.

Tubs can grow to over 10lb, but from the shore you rarely catch them over one. Tom's fish wouldn't be troubling any records, but it was still a fine example of the species, with its huge head and azure blue lined pectoral fins that looked more like wings. The paddletail was hooked perfectly in its armour-plated top lip and in classic gurnard fashion, it posed beautifully for the camera before being released to torment the baitfish once more.

The day had one final surprise in store for me, and it proved to be my most satisfying catch of the day, possibly the year. As I described in the introduction, I had managed to successfully hook a fish in the depths on the 15g jig. It definitely wasn't a gurnard, although for part of the awkward, scrappy fight I was convinced it was a small mackerel. But no, it was far more exciting than that. I had caught, fair and square in the mouth, a red bandfish on a metal.

For me, catching fish on metal lures is the finest way. To convince a fish that a flashy piece of metal is edible, especially if that species isn't one you usually associate with metal jigs, is the ultimate prize. As I admired my third red bandfish of the day, metal jig hooked firmly in the bottom jaw, the day had turned from excellent into exceptional. Shortly after watching that fantastic fish disappear into the inky blue, we headed back into the harbour and then home, on a huge high from an awesome day's fishing. ■

"Posing with a fish that is little more than five inches long sums up the madness and joy in species hunting; those of us who do it are all a bit weird, but our appreciation for the smaller fish species is unrivalled"

Words and Photography by DAVE LEWIS

STRIKING GOLD

UK & IRELAND SPECIALIST SPECIES HUNTING

Scale right down if you want to add the widely distributed but less commonly caught goldsinny wrasse to your species list, as Dave Lewis explains

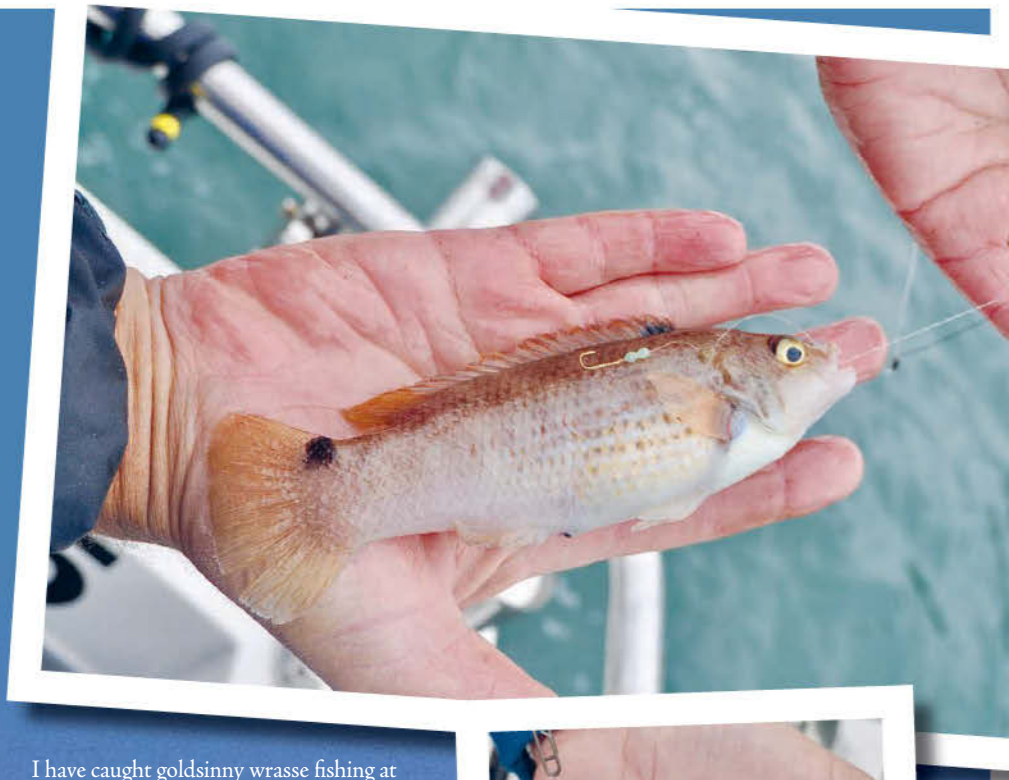
The goldsinny wrasse, Ctenolabrus rupestris, is brown, greenish or orange-red in colour, and can be distinguished from other wrasse species by two distinct dark patches, one on the dorsal fin and one just in front of the tail fin. The head is small and pointed, with a large mouth, two rows of small teeth, and fleshy lips. The goldsinny is found in the eastern Atlantic Ocean from Norway, south as far as Morocco. It is also found throughout the western and central Mediterranean Sea as far as Antalya in Turkey.

The goldsinny is one of our smallest wrasse species, growing to a maximum of around 18cm in length. However, the majority of fish encountered are much smaller. The current British record is held with a fish that weighed 110g, about 4oz, which was caught off Weymouth. For the species hunter goldsinny wrasse are a relatively easy species to target as they are widely distributed throughout the British Isles. You'll find them along most rocky shores, reefs, wrecks and around harbour walls, piers and breakwaters. These are certainly one species that can be targeted with a high degree of probability, rather than just a possibility.

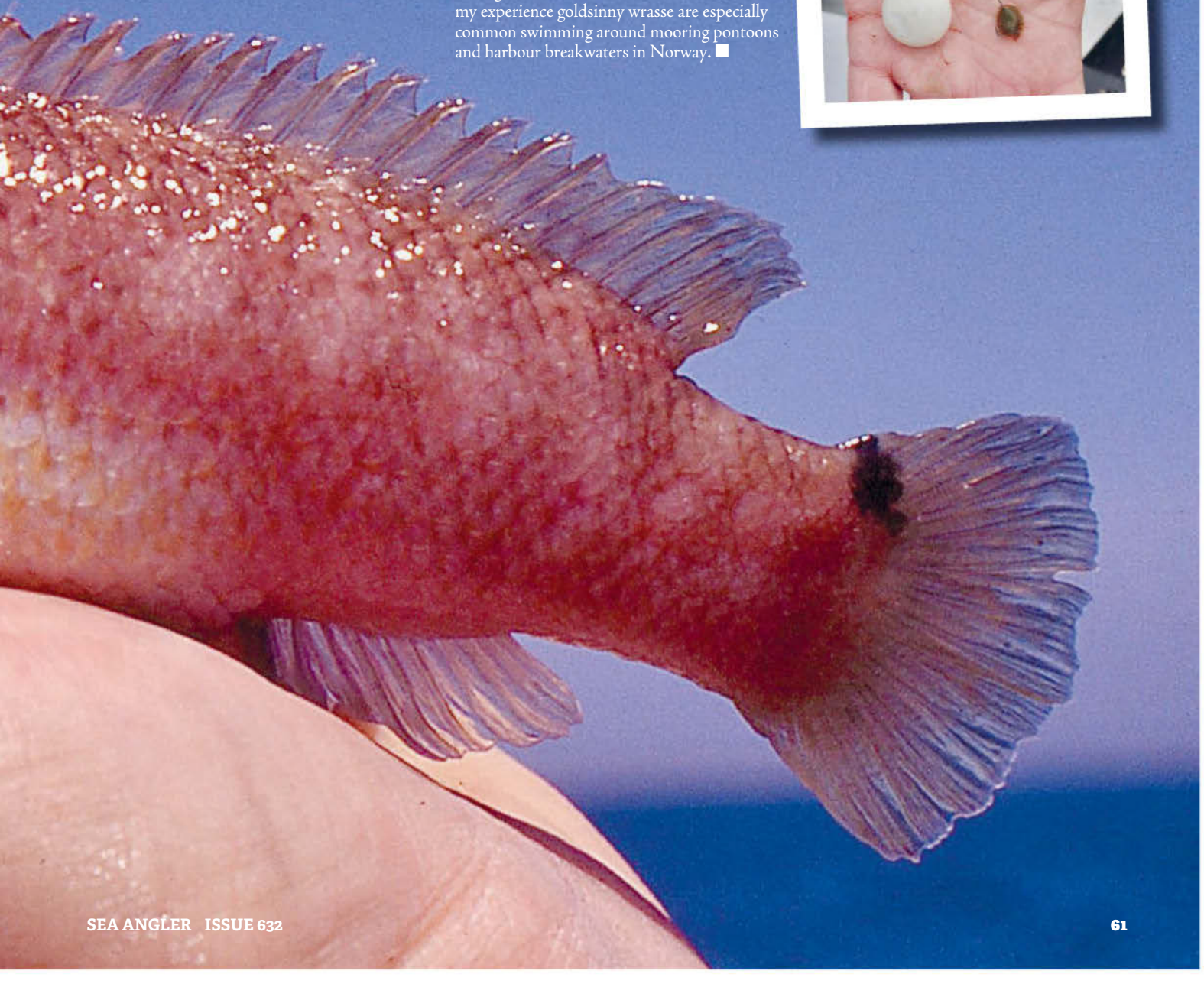
TACTICS

The trick to catching goldsinny wrasse is to scale down and fish light. Small hooks around size 10-12 are required. These should be baited with small pieces of ragworm. Other baits work, notably the legs off a peeler crab, but I have found sections of ragworm to be especially effective. Goldsinny wrasse are very aggressive, and as a result can be successfully targeted using both soft-plastic and metal LRF lures.

Clearly a light rod is best when fishing for these mini species. An LRF set up is ideal when fishing from the shore, or one of the lighter continental style boat rods with a fine quiver tip if fishing afloat. Two or three hook paternoster type rigs are perfect, the addition of coloured beads might help, but these are not essential. Many species hunters put a lot of faith in small luminous beads, and even leads coated in luminous paint. Bait the hook with just enough bait to cover the bend, as shown. Lower the baited rig all the way down to the bottom and maintain direct contact in order to detect bites which are usually hard and positive. Set the hook by lifting when the fish is tugging away at the bait.



I have caught goldsinny wrasse fishing at numerous locations throughout the south and west of the UK, including several rocky locations in south and west Wales. Some of the most productive areas are found over small, isolated wrecks. The species is common throughout Ireland and Scotland, and from my experience goldsinny wrasse are especially common swimming around mooring pontoons and harbour breakwaters in Norway. ■



Words and Photography by LINDSEY GREEN

MEAN & MOODY THE MAGNIFICENT BULL HUSS

Double figure bull huss get their heads down and keep the fight going as long as they can. It doesn't stop onboard the boat either!

Living close to Dartmouth, the Skerries Bank offers a wonderful opportunity to go plaice fishing, which I thoroughly enjoy. However, when both tides and the fish are small, especially early season, it is nice to break things up by anchoring and going after something altogether different, which is where the bull huss comes into play.

Properly known as a nursehound or large-spotted catshark, the bull huss is often referred to by anglers as the greater spotted dogfish, which is a bit of an anomaly because it is not actually a dogfish: neither is the lesser-spotted dogfish for that matter! Nor is this a recent phenomenon with the species being reclassified around 120 years ago when scientists noticed that its anatomy disqualified it from being a true dogfish at all.

If, like me, you like to know things by their proper name a true dogfish has widely spaced dorsal fins, a pointy head and only two sets of ventral (on the bottom of the body) fins. By contrast, a catshark has three sets of ventral fins, the dorsal fins are placed towards the rear of the body and the front of the head is more rounded.

That aside, bull huss fight, if you'll pardon the pun, doggedly and this doesn't stop when you get them on the boat. It may not be a sprinter but the species has a tenacious, muscular strength that any person who has tried to hold one still for the camera can testify to. It is also well-known for its tendency to try and bite anyone who is trying to remove a hook or hold it incorrectly! Give it a chance and this bad-tempered beast will lunge for any part of the body that it can sink its teeth into. It is quick too, so be warned and be careful unless you want a painful injury.

TACKLE AND TACTICS

Fishing for them requires tackle to match. I use 60lb fluorocarbon trace with not less than a 12lb to 20lb pound class rod: as much because many of the marks near me have really strong tidal flows so a 12oz weight can be necessary to hold bottom. 20lb braid mainline is usually sufficient, although you may want to increase this in the event of tangles with neighbouring anglers. Make sure that you fit it with a heavier nylon monofilament leader, just in case the fish comes in under the boat where the line can rub against the keel.

As for the terminal rig, a running leger or a boom with short trace will do fine. Long traces do not seem to do too well either, with some anglers preferring to use less than a foot of heavy nylon while, on occasion, I have known paternosters to catch the bigger specimens. Interestingly enough, the biggest that I have seen caught – a 16 pounder – was taken on a paternoster with a black muppet placed behind the bait, which was a cocktail of mackerel and squid strip.

Short, strong traces with a 3/0 or bigger circle hook are the favourites down here. Pennell rigs are decidedly frowned upon, especially by skippers who are trying to get the hook out of an angry, writhing fish while avoiding potential lunges as it retaliates at the least opportunity. A second hook above the first makes this doubly perilous and is definitely not necessary. If you are using one to improve bait presentation – completely pointless for bull huss – use bait elastic instead.

The first time that I tried for them on a Skerries trip, I was fishing with other members of Baywater Anglers, a Torbay-

based club with a great camaraderie amongst its members. We were fishing with Alan Hemsley, skipper of the African Queen out of Dartmouth, as we have done on numerous occasions since.

Although we started by going for plaice, it was one of those days where the average stamp of fish was very small, as can happen at the beginning of the year. Alan was not impressed and suggested that we anchor up over the quiet period of the tide, having a go for the species that like to linger on, or very near to, patches of rocks.

At first, with very little movement in the tide, not much was doing. I took a little small-eyed ray while a few lessers came over the side. I even tried live prawns, thinking that it might escape them but no chance; they loved them to bits, literally.

Then the tide started and the size and variety of fish began to change. Bull huss started to come aboard, at first quite small but they gradually got bigger, providing us all with a lot better sport. It was great fun that sometimes saw several rods bent over at the same time.

The final run of action saw Steve Furze bending into something bigger and more tenacious. His rod was sharply pulled over and registered every nod as the fish sought to keep its head down and dive back to the bottom. It gave him quite a struggle but eventually, protesting, it was netted and came over the side. Of course, getting it to behave itself as we took a picture was another matter. It caught Alan as he took the hook out but then, between its constant writhings, we managed to get a decent photograph, Steve grimly hanging on as it sought to twist and escape him.

When we weighed it the scales went to exactly 14lb, a new Baywater Anglers record, which he was seriously chuffed with. Well done, Steve! ■

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Q&A

SHORE ANGLING

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CHRIS KENNEDY

Chris is a specimen hunting specialist based on Sark and answers shore fishing questions.

DAVE LEWIS

Based in Newport, South Wales, our contributing editor Dave answers boat fishing questions.

DAVID MITCHELL

David is Sea Angler's editor and is an expert on sea angling policy and conservation .

HENRY GILBEY

Angler, blogger and photo-journalist Henry, based in Cornwall, is our lure expert.

BEN BASSETT

The Plymouth angler and blogger will provide answers on the sport of light rock fishing (LRF), the go-anywhere tactic.

HOW TO ASK US A QUESTION

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By asking a question you are giving us permission to use your name and where you live in all versions and platforms of this magazine.

Q I've recently started match fishing and I'd like to introduce my oldest son, who is seven, to the world of match fishing. What would you say is a suitable age to start? Are there any organisations that could put me on the right path? I am a great learner but, regrettably, not a great teacher.

GEOFF WILSON, WEST SUSSEX

DM says: We asked Mark Slater, manager of the England under 21 shore fishing team for this year's World Championships, for his advice: "In my opinion, as soon as a youngster can cast and retrieve safely, then match fishing is the way forwards to hone skills and learn from others around them. A lot of clubs encourage juniors and will have some pegs set out for parent and child, as well as providing prizes for juniors. The Angling Trust is heavily involved with the Talent Pathway programme which has been set-up to identify and encourage young talented anglers through the Junior, Youth and Mens shore angling teams." Our advice is to find out which of your local clubs caters for juniors fishing in matches including providing junior sections, coaching and running events and matches for young anglers.

Q With the recent news that there will finally be a legal recreational fishery for bluefin tuna later this year, does that mean we will be allowed to fish for them from the shore?

KIERAN PHELAN, HAMPSHIRE

DM says: According to the UK Bluefin Tuna Association, fishing from the shore will not be permitted in 2024. Opening a recreational fishery is dependent on a change being made in the Fisheries Act to allow licensing of vessels only. Licenses will just be issued to a small number of selected vessels and the registered owner. A 'master' may be appointed if the owner has a skipper operating the vessel – it's the same way commercial licenses are designated. It is estimated, but not confirmed, that around 75 UK wide licenses will be issued.

The terms of qualification are still under discussion and will be confirmed before the application process opens in April/May this year, along with any requirements regarding permitted gear.

Q I live in the south and catching a cod is far rarer than catching a bass. With cod stocks heavily depleted, especially in the Channel and southern North Sea, why are there not catch limits for anglers, such as the bag limit which was implemented for bass?

STEPHEN SIM

DM says: The absence of cod in the Channel and southern North Sea has as much to do with changing sea temperatures as overfishing. As such, any catch limit wouldn't achieve very much as the stock has migrated further north to colder water and even a total cessation of fishing for cod would not result in a recovery of the stock. The commercial catch quotas for Channel and North Sea cod are a bit pointless as the stock simply doesn't exist anymore. If climate change weren't a factor then there may be merit in considering catch limits. However, there isn't enough evidence to know what impact anglers have on the cod stock and what impact catch limits (such as a bag limit) would have. The impact of angling on bass was estimated to be around 25 per cent of landings in 2015 when the bag limit was first introduced, and therefore 'significant' enough in scientific terms that catch limits on angling would have an impact on recovering the stock. At the peak of the cod fishery the stock was so large, and the commercial landings so big, that the impact of angling could have been well under 1 per cent of total fishing mortality and therefore not significant enough to warrant catch limits. A few years ago the EU introduced a bag limit for the eastern cod stock in the Baltic Sea after it collapsed as a result of different factors coming together. The evidence at the time suggested that recreational catches were accounting for up to 50 per cent of landings and that angling was therefore having a significant impact on the stock. The bag limit is still in place but has since been reduced – the eastern Baltic cod stock really is in a terrible state. Pollack will be the next species with catch limits for anglers in the UK but at the moment there isn't enough knowledge about the stock, or the impact of recreational catches, to take any action. However, watch this space.

Q I enjoyed reading the feature in Sea Angler about catching bass in the Norfolk Broads but how far up-river can you fish without needing a rod licence from the Environment Agency if you might catch pike, perch or zander from the same water you're fishing for bass?

DWAYNE COOMBS, SHROPSHIRE

DM says: The answer is that you don't need a rod license if you are fishing for sea fish in tidal waters. The confusion often occurs because there are very few definitions of where 'tidal' waters end. This often then comes down to intent: are you intentionally fishing for sea fish or coarse/game fish? For example, fly fishing for bass could easily be mistaken for fishing for sea trout, float fishing for mullet could be mistaken for targeting chub or roach and lure fishing for bass could be mistaken for fishing for perch or pike. If it could be proven that you were intentionally fishing for coarse or game fish without a valid licence, or during the closed season, then you could be liable for prosecution. In practice, proving this can be extremely difficult and may not be worth the time and expense of pursuing for the EA. The best advice is to check directly with your local EA fisheries team who will advise what their position on enforcement is in your location. Keep a record of any communication you have had regarding this. Should you be challenged, any evidence to show you have made the effort to clarify this will work in your favour.

SEA SCHOOL

Our experts solve your fishing problems

Q&A

BOAT ANGLING

Q As an angler who regularly fishes North Wales charters would it be possible for me to target squid (especially larger ones) with squid jigs in the winter?

CRAIG ELLIS, WREXHAM

DL says: Fishing for squid is increasing in popularity with UK anglers. Regarding catching squid in North Wales I made a few calls and was told that yes, in certain areas they can be caught. The most productive marks appear to be off Anglesey, especially around Holyhead, where anglers catch good numbers of squid, on squid jigs. I was told that the prime time is from mid November up until the end of January. Many tackle shops now stock a range of squid jigs, and some of the most effective ones are luminous.

Q Is it possible to catch haddock on lures?

ROGER BACON, DURHAM

DL says: Yes, surprisingly it is! Often when fishing in Norway and Iceland I have caught and seen haddock caught on lures, often on large lures, too. The traditional three sided stainless steel Norwegian style pirks with the red plastic sheath around the shank of the hook are very effective. That said, were I to specifically set out to target haddock, I'd use bait such as shellfish, worms or squid.

Q I tried some different coloured, very large sparkly lure/feathers with pollock fishing in mind, but should I have tried a certain colour for pollock? Are some lures and feathers successful because you have selected the correct colour that attracts your target fish?

JOHN SMITH POLEGATE EAST SUSSEX

DL says: This is one of those questions to which you'll receive a different answer from everyone you ask. From my experience feathers have always been very successful for catching pollack, with white being my personal colour of choice. That said, on their day any colour will catch. Plain feathers without the addition of any flash work very well.

Q What is a rhubarb and custard lure?

STEVE BROWNING, DORCHESTER

DL says: Rhubarb and custard is not a specific type of lure, rather the colour combination of a lure, as shown. Usually these are soft plastics of the shad type, which were very popular with wreck and reef anglers a few years ago.

Q I know that razorfish is an excellent bait for many different species, but I always have a problem preparing it on a hook. For example when uptiding, most of the bait is ripped off during the cast.

GREGOR PAVEL, CARDIFF

DL says: Razorfish is indeed a superb bait. If using frozen bait ensure that it is fully defrosted before attempting to mount it onto a hook, as partially frozen bait will break up. Some anglers use a baiting needle, as shown, lightly wrapping the soft white meat in elastic before transferring it to the hook. Personally I start by inserting the hook at the tough end of the bait, then lightly twisting the meat, threading on some more, twisting and more threading until the entire bait is mounted. This is then secured in place with elastic. Do not apply the elastic with too much tension, as it will cut into the meat.

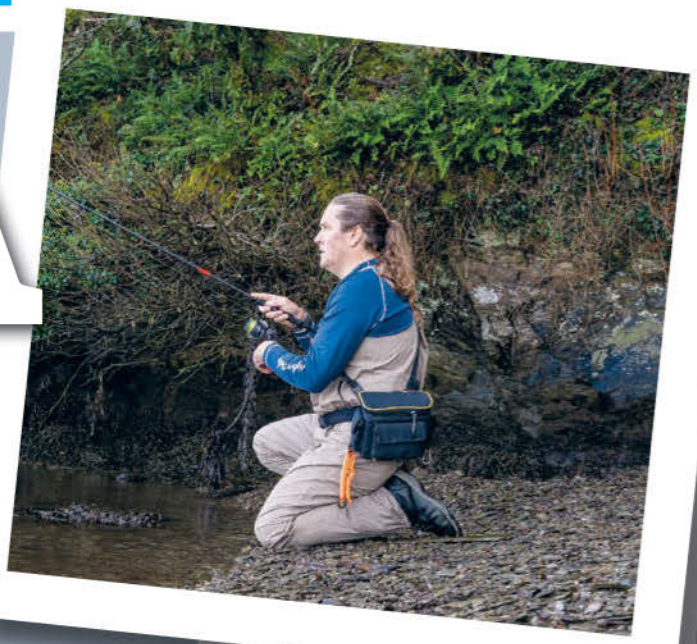
Q Do the Coastguard mind if I contact them in a non-emergency in order to check my VHF radio is transmitting as well as receiving?

JOHN MILES, SOMERSET

DL says: No, quite the opposite! When I had my own boats I'd contact the nearest coastguard station at the start of every day. I'd give them the name and type of boat, how many persons were aboard, where we were going, explain we would be fishing and finally our ETA, Expected Time of Arrival back at our launch site. If any of these details changed, I'd recontact them and provide an update. Most importantly, don't forget to contact them at the end of the day to confirm you have arrived back safely.

Q&A

LURE FISHING



Q Open coast or estuary bass fishing, Henry: which do you prefer and why?

LEE BOARDMAN, HAMPSHIRE

HG says: I don't prefer either because I love them both. When I started getting into bass fishing I thought that lure fishing for bass was mainly about shallow reefs and estuaries that were best targeted with bait. Over the years I am come to realise that bass happen to be one of the most widespread and interesting angling quarries in our waters. I had no idea that you could legitimately target this one species of saltwater fish in so many different environments and in so many different ways.

I love my open coast bass fishing when the conditions are lovely and bouncy, or nice and calm and quiet in the dead of night. I love being forced to cover lots of ground and walk many miles if I want quiet, out of the way fishing, but then I disappear into an estuary system and I find it equally if not more fascinating. My biggest bass to date came from an estuary, but for all my estuary-based lure fishing over the years I still know that I have a scary amount more to learn. How far do bass really move into river systems for example? How might we better target bass which are head-down and feeding on crab? What are the sight-fishing opportunities? There is so much to it all and I love it all equally.

Q I notice that you sometimes talk about sharpening your hooks. Do you really think it's that important?

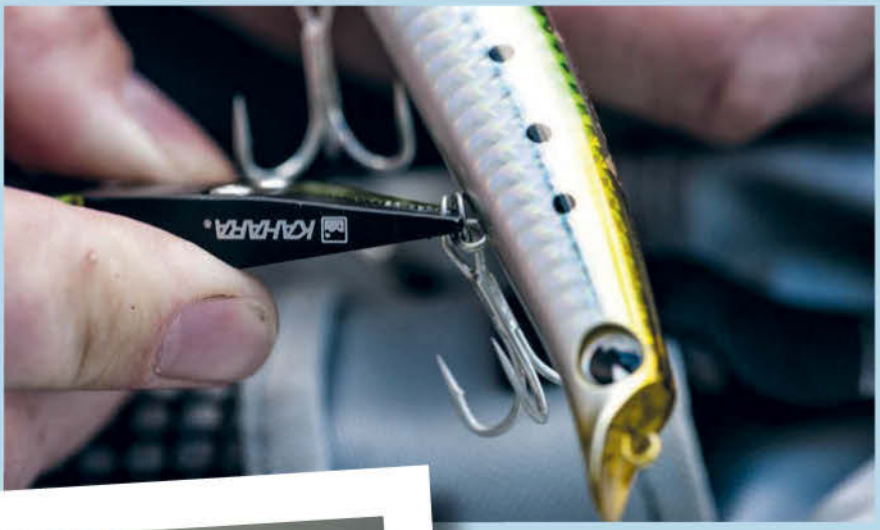
PAUL WATSON, SOMERSET

HG says: In a word, yes! However, I rarely see anglers checking and sharpening their hooks and I just don't get it. We put so much time, effort and cost into trying to catch the different fish we chase, so why on earth use blunt hooks which surely help to lessen the odds in your favour?

Bass aren't exactly easy to come by in January and I will always remember a good friend of mine hooking and losing two decent bass one early January morning in some perfect conditions. A hooked fish can always come off, but two in the same session? I asked my friend if I could check the treble hooks on his Tackle House Feed Shallow hard lure, and they were horribly blunt. We are all guilty of not checking our hook points enough; that January morning was the perfect example. You put the time and effort into finding some fish but there's a flaw in your setup which, to be honest, doesn't need to be there.

I carry some sort of sharpening implement with me when I go fishing. Ideally I want my hook sharpener to be small enough to live in a pocket on my waders or else in the lure bag which sits at my side. The Savage Gear Diamond Dust Hook File sharpener is pretty good but you want to keep it away from saltwater and it's a little larger than we need for the hooks we use. I have recently come across the clever little Smith's Diamond retractable sharpener which lives in the chest pocket of my waders.

Remember that when you sharpen a hook you want to drag the hookpoint in the opposite direction to how you might expect. You need to move the hook with the point moving forwards if that makes sense, rather than running the point backwards. This is the best way to get a really sharp point back on your blunted hooks.



Q I need to replace the treble hooks on some of my lures, what sizes do I need to get?

STEVE PARKER, SWANSEA

HG says: There is a good chance that at least some of your hard lures came in packaging with Japanese words on there. I don't understand Japanese and Google Translate doesn't exactly work on a packet, so have a look on the back of your lure packaging and see if you can see this # symbol which will be followed by a number. If it says something like 3 x #4 then your lure was rigged with three size four treble hooks. Replace with the same size. Size four treble hooks are about the most commonly used on hard lures.

However, size six trebles are often used on some of the smaller and narrower-profile hard lures. On the bigger surface lures #3 or #2 trebles can be popular. If you no longer have the packaging then look for the specific lure online and on most shop websites they will list the technical details of the lure which usually includes the hook sizes. You can, of course, simply try and match the hooks visually if all else fails.

Q&A

LIGHT ROCK FISHING

Q I'm planning on heading down to Plymouth this week. Can you point me in the right direction on LRF marks to try as I've never fished it before?
CARL DOBLE, SOUTH WALES

BB says: Plymouth is often called the spiritual home of LRF in the UK with a great variety of marks to choose from. It means normally, unless you are dealing with extreme weather, you can find somewhere that is fishable and at all states of the tide. My recommendations would be Mount Batten Breakwater, Elphinstone Car Park and Mutton Cove. Mount Batten has access to deep, open water for a mixture of pelagic species on metals and aji tactics, plus the sea defence boulders that are full of species using chebs, jigheads, dropshot or splitshot rigs. Elphi is an easy access, safe mark with clean ground further out and snags and weed below the rod tip. Mutton Cove is on the west side of the city on the river Tamar. This is a famous mark for bait fishing but provides regular sport on LRF tackle, either close in or further out in midwater. Mutton is a mark that often fishes better at night under the streetlights.

Q The past few trips out I've missed so many bites. That's got me questioning what's actually going on under the water. When I'm getting hit I usually feel the weight of the fish as I strike but it's coming straight back off. Also, the bites can sometimes be just one solitary hit then absolutely nothing. What's happening here? I never usually miss so many bites.
DAVE TAYLOR, CORNWALL

BB says: This is a key symptom of winter LRF: the cooler waters often mean we have less committed bites on lures. You may find fish are pecking at it, but because of the texture or taste they decide not to commit. It could also be territorial attacks rather than true feeding behaviour. Sometimes it is worth thinking about different tide states or weather patterns. Some fish species will be more actively feeding on the flood for example, or during the day or night. Experiment to find the fish either by going bigger or smaller, trying different colours, shapes and presentations; you will be rewarded once you find the trigger. In the winter I also try to go as light as possible to avoid resistance for the biting fish.

Q I'm totally new to lerfing. My mate took me out this weekend and I really enjoyed it, so I'm looking at getting a few bits and just have a few questions. For Dropshot rigs made of fluorocarbon, what breaking strain do you use? For braid, I was looking at 0.1mm four strand 13lb. Is this too thin? Would something like 15lb 0.16 be better? Lastly, how long can you use an Isome worm? If it's cut very small, how long is it effective for in the water?
AARON SPENCER SLADE, NEWTON ABBOT

BB says: I usually use 3lb breaking strain for my fluorocarbon leaders. You can land most small to mid-sized species on it and it still gives you a fine presentation. For braid, 13lb is much too heavy. Look for a 5-6lb rated fine braid; the casting ability will change your fishing. In regards to scented worms like Gulp or Marukyu Isome, it's hard to tell how long it is effective for, but I regularly change if I'm not getting bites. Simply put it back in the liquid to re-use the section later.

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TIME TO GO

After 50 years of writing for Sea Angler **John Holden** is retiring. Before he does, the guru of casting has one final piece of advice for you

I have enjoyed a long and rewarding journey in sea fishing. My casting career began in the cow field next to our house. Armed with an ancient rod and reel, and guided by an article by Leslie Moncrieff in Creel magazine, I struggled to throw a 6oz lead. And I struggled. And I struggled. Then one evening it all clicked. I didn't know why then, and I am still not sure. The sinker flew high and far. The reel purred. My thumb didn't bleed. And I needed a bigger field.

I made a longer, stiffer rod from an old bamboo cane with welding wire rings taped on. My pride and joy was a Penn Surfmaster 100 reel. The magic continued. My new field was over 175 yards long and my best casts were landing beyond the far hedge, across the brook and in the next field. I began winning tournaments.

Fishing was great too because this was the peak of an extraordinary time for beach cod, where on my part of the east coast double-figure fish were ten a penny and five pounders could be a disappointment. I like to think that the array of new rods, reels and casting methods that drew literally thousands of keen fishermen to the beach back then were in part influenced by our early efforts in tackle design, casting styles and on the tournament fields.

Today we are spoiled for choice with high-tech carbon rods, precision engineered reels and a host of bits and pieces all aimed to make fishing better and casts longer. Yet the foundations of the sport remain unchanged. Despite the hype and promises of the latest kit, success is still down to personal effort. You have to work at it, and that often brings disappointment and frustration as well as reward.

Whether you focus on fishing or casting, the best advice I can give is to find somebody to help you, be that a club coach, a mate or even a YouTuber. You can learn more in an hour that way than in a decade of working alone.

How far you'll end up casting is down to you, your natural talent and whatever magic the gods hand down that gives one caster a big advantage over the others, even when there seems no logical reason why. Be the best caster and fisherman you can be in whatever circumstances you find yourself. Don't measure your efforts against champions and record distances. Do your best and be happy with the results. It's all just a game anyway.

I have always promised myself to stop writing when the time felt right. That time is now, and this is my last piece for Sea Angler. My thanks go to Sea Angler for giving me a platform for 50 years. My great respect and admiration go to you the fishermen and casters around the world who have given me such vast encouragement and help. May all your casts be long and straight, and land in one piece... ■

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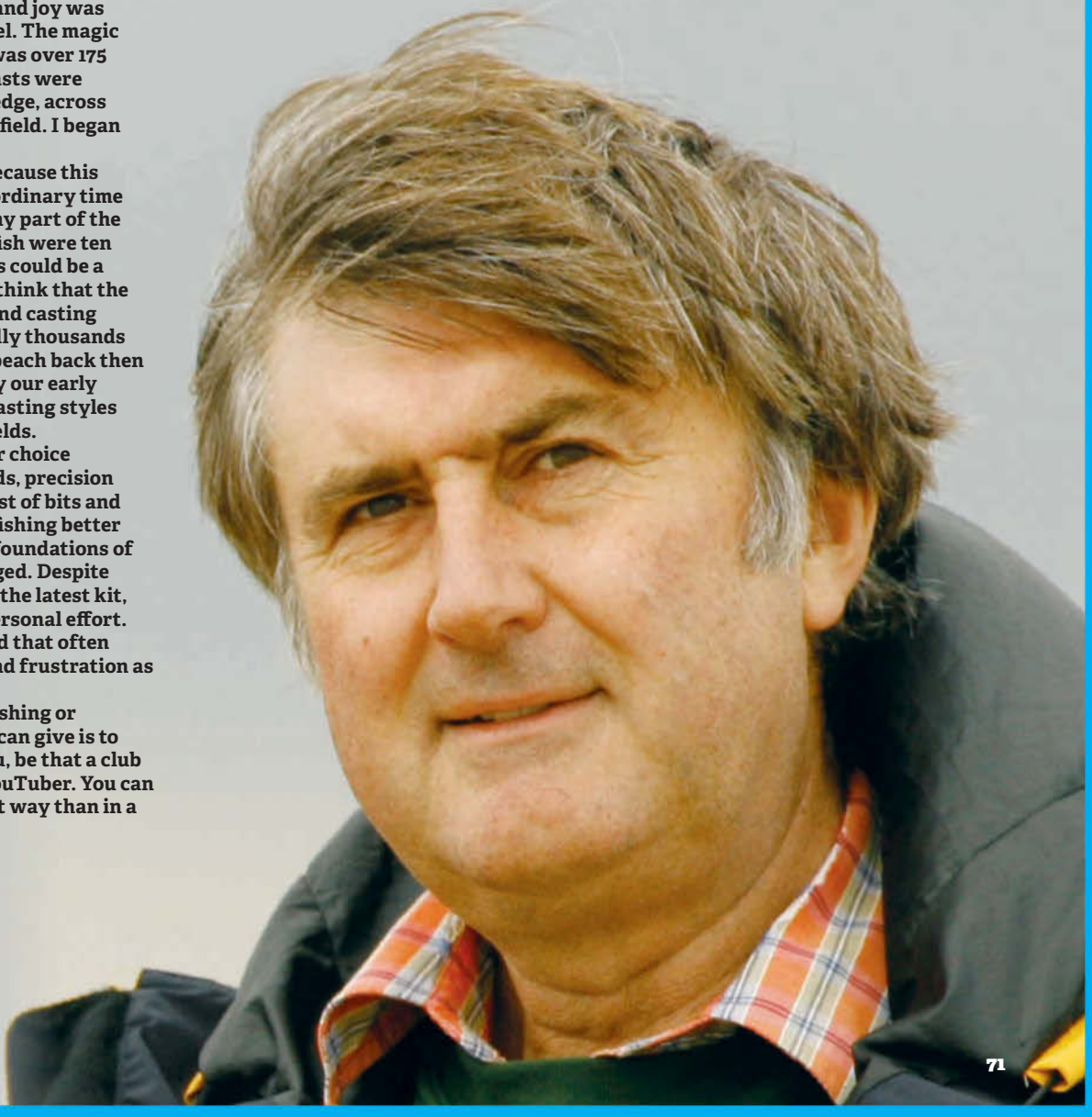


Artwork by Andy Steer

Check out the step-by-step video at: youtu.be/fp9FjjCTnIA

WIRE LEADER MODIFIED FIGURE OF EIGHT KNOT

Ideal for toothy fish where a wire trace is necessary, the modified figure of eight knot works well with coated braided wire and kink-proof single or multi-strand nickel-titanium wire leaders. It forms a compact knot which will not slip under pressure.

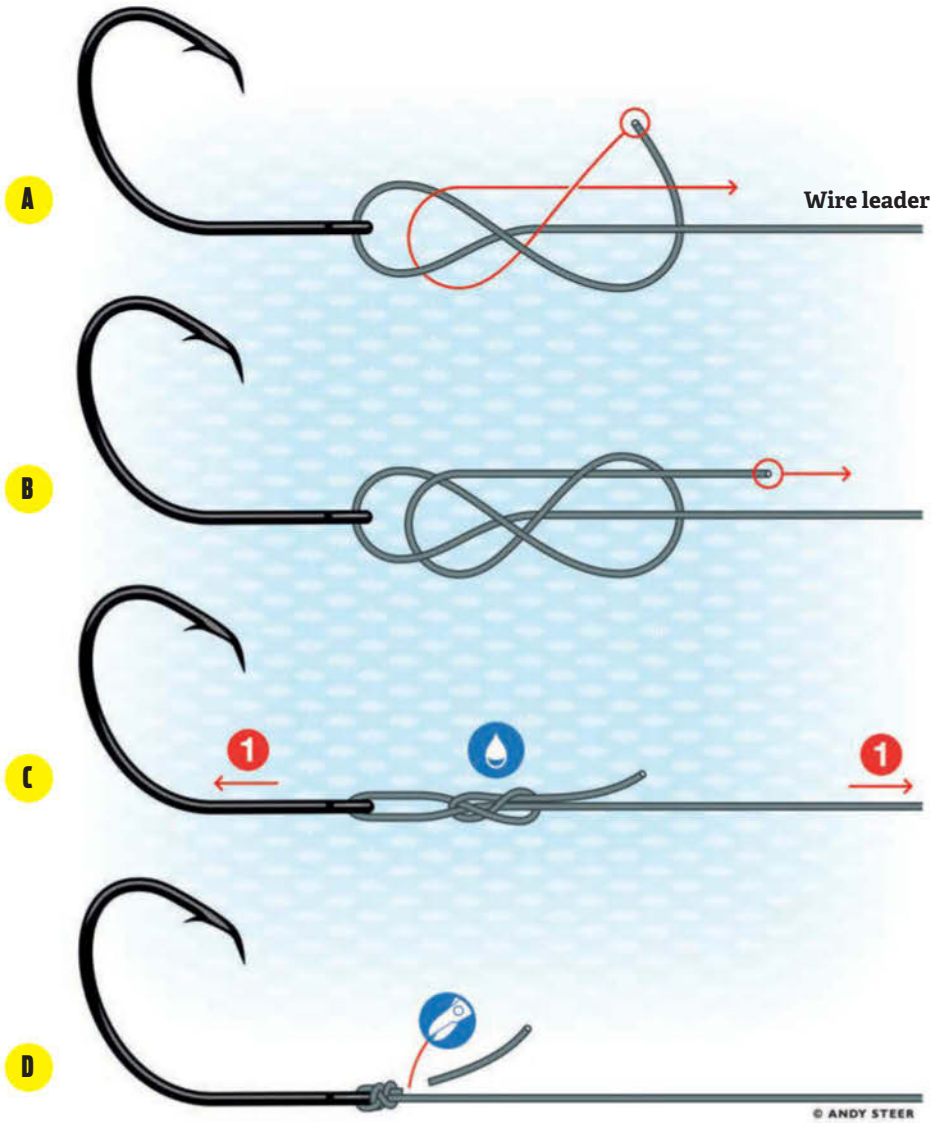
Step-by-step

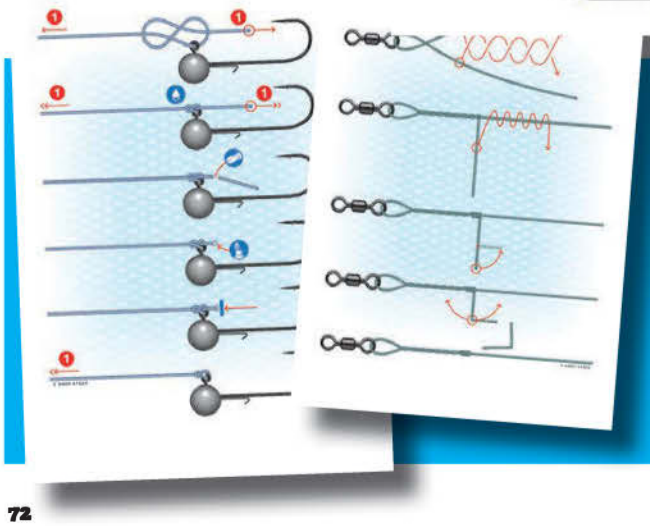
A Pass the end of the leader through the eye of the hook or swivel and around the other end of the leader.

B Bring the tag end through the original loop formed and then back through the decond loop (as shown).

C Lubricate the knot and pull tightly from both ends of the wire until the knot butts up to the eye of the hook or swivel.

D Finally, use pliers to trim the tag end of the wire.





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NEW Talk to us about Sørøya and Rodrigues Island (recommended by Anglers World Holidays angling consultant Kevin McKie)

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FIRST LOOK

Your update on the latest gear arriving in the tackle shops

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Colour: Black and Navy

- RRP £170
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FIRST LOOK SPECIAL

SUPER SONIK LUGGAGE

Northumberland based tackle manufacturer Sonik Sports has recently launched a new range of eye-catching sea angling luggage. The stylish set of products has been designed specifically with shore anglers in mind and we've been testing it out over recent weeks. We started by looking at the quiver holdall, rucksack and fixed spool reel case.

QUIVER HOLDALL

Loaded down like a packhorse the long trek across the shingle is always hard work: rods, seatbox overloaded with gear, tripod and bait bucket. The only way this is even possible is to carry rods on your back in a case leaving both hands free for everything else! The new Sonik Quiver Holdall has clearly been designed to ease the burden and it does just that: hold all. The spaciousness of it allows you to fit multiple rods, plus a beach shelter and carry your tripod with its external tripod pocket. The handy side compression straps can be adjusted to secure your rods from rattling around on long hikes or down those treacherous coastal paths. The central divider and internal straps helps to separate your rods and add extra protection. The open ended quiver design allows you to carry rods of any length which gives it a definite advantage.

FEATURES:

- HD 600D PVC backed Oxford polyester material
- Fully lined and padded with reinforced waterproof base
- Large padded central divider with Velcro rod retainers
- Anti-corrosion salt-water resistant zipper
- External tripod holder
- Six position balance-point padded shoulder strap
- Two external compression straps
- Side carry handle and easy access zip
- RRP: £44.99

FIXED SPOOL REEL CASE

A tough padded and fully lined single reel case, made from hard wearing PVC fabric to keep fragile reels safely protected. An anti-corrosion zipper and large zip pulls make it easy to access and it's sized to hold most fixed spool beach fishing reels.

FEATURES:

- Waterproof hardwearing PVC fabric
- Fully lined and padded
- Anti-corrosion zippers
- Large zip track and zip pullers
- RRP: 10.99

RUCKSACK

The Sonik Sea Rucksack has been refined and improved to offer even more storage options and versatility. It is constructed from heavy duty 600D PVC backed material and has a reinforced waterproof base. The large 45 litre central compartment has a full drawstring top opening for easy access and the large storm flap quickly seals this compartment from the worst weather. The large front pocket is perfect for rig wallets and terminal tackle and the comfortable padded harness has a hip belt for when you are carrying more kit or bait. All pockets feature anti-corrosion saltwater resistant zips with added storm flaps for extra protection. If you have a Sonik Cool Bait Bag then this can be carried in the top of the rucksack giving you a combined bait and tackle carrying system. Lastly, the rucksack features four compression straps that are useful for carrying extra accessories when needed.

FEATURES:

- Large central compartment with draw cord and storm flap
- HD 600D PVC backed Oxford polyester material
- Heavy-duty waterproof base
- Anti-corrosion salt-water resistant zippers
- Padded harness with grab handle sternum strap and hip belt
- Large, zipped front pocket and two zipped side pockets
- Zip pocket in flap
- Two useful bottle holders
- Four retaining straps for larger accessories
- RRP: £49.99

For more information and the full range of new luggage from Sonik go to www.soniksports.com

Words and photography by CHRIS KENNEDY

GRAB YOUR GRUBS!

Chris Kennedy selects his top choice wellies for cold weather – the Grubs Eskline 8.5

For many sea anglers a decent pair of wellies are essential for the vast majority of fishing applications or venues around the UK and Ireland. Wellies have come on leaps and bounds in terms of warmth, comfort and resistance to saltwater conditions. That's something that we should be very grateful for: wellies are the most functional footwear option for being in and around the water's edge.

Like most of us, I started with a very basic pair. I can't remember if they were Dunlop or a similar popular brand, but they rubbed my feet, were uncomfortable and didn't offer any insulation. Next up, I went for a pair of Barbour wellies, which cost a fair bit and weren't all that much better than the Dunlop ones, in a practical sense. I then went for some Hunter wellies; their offering for very cold temperatures was called "snow boots", and I purchased them in around 2011. I gather they have released subsequent models, which are probably improved, but this neoprene pair that I had were just useless in the winter months. My toes froze every time I used them in colder temperatures; they were a misery to stand fishing or shooting in. I honestly felt it was a blessing the days I could fish in my waders or hiking boots.

GOING SUB-ZERO

It wasn't until around 2017 that I heard regular Norway trippers rave about the Grubs Snowline 12.5 wellies. I have visited Norway in autumn, winter and spring since 2014 and one thing which was very important in icy conditions was a boot that could house tungsten studs to offer traction in slippery conditions. I ended up speaking with RockGrip, who sold the Grubs Snowline 12.5s with the studs already fitted. They sent me a pair and I instantly loved them. For the first time I could go out in sub-zero temperatures and actually have toasty warm feet. The thick neoprene offered tremendous insulation and they'd done something else which was very important in the construction: made them with a thick sole which was very comfortable when treading on pebbled or rocky beaches. They were perfect for Norway, and I ended up running them into the ground with intense angling use over the course of about five years.

I went to purchase another pair last year and quickly worked out that the Grubs Snowline 12.5 were out of stock everywhere: unobtainable due to a supply issue in the UK market. These were approximately £120 a pair and I was very pleased when Owain Morgan, one of the Century Sea Team members, dropped a discounted link to the Grubs Warehouse sale. Just about everyone on the team purchased a couple of pairs of wellies as the prices were irresistible on sale.

The Eskline 8.5 wellies were reduced to £30, or £35 delivered. I ended up buying one pair, on the recommendation of others, as well as a pair of the Grubbs Fieldline wellies, which I have used for bait digging and low tide foraging. This was back in March 2022. The Eskline, with its 8.5mm neoprene, have been brilliant: warm, durable and super comfortable on uneven ground.

The Eskline 8.5 usually carry a full retail price of around £99, but during these incredible sale periods at Grubbs Warehouse, the price drops to around £30. At the time of writing this article, I could also find them at alternative outlets for around £64.99. I can't emphasise enough how good the value for money these wellies represent is; they are a fantastic quality boot that brings comfort, warmth and durability whilst fishing, at home and in colder climbs. When dreading on uneven, rocky ground, you don't want to feel sharp stones through your feet, and the buffered thick sole is tremendous.

BUY BIG

It's worth me pointing out that when purchasing wellies, you should buy them a size bigger than you'd normally buy. The reason is that if you are wearing warm socks and wish to keep your feet insulated, you need some space in the welly to allow the thermal socks to loft and insulate properly. If the footwear is too tight and the socks are crushed, they lose their insulation. So, buy slightly bigger than you usually need for winter or colder climate usage.

If you are fishing rock or ice, wearing tungsten studs is a big advantage. You may wish to purchase BestGrip studs separately and screw them into the soles of your Grubs wellies. This is a must in Norway and very handy on certain types of rocky terrain to stop you from slipping. Studs will sometimes pull out of the sole during heavy usage, but I think at a price, it is something I am not concerned about.

In terms of wear, I thrashed ones bought in 2022 and they have plenty of life left in them and no signs of degradation from saltwater. The pair photographed are my second pair I bought in 2023; they were too good to refuse at £30 and I thought I would have another pair in the shed, for when I do finally wear the first pair out! We do review and test lots of products at Sea Angler, many of which can be expensive or top end. It's nice when we find a diamond in the rough, like the Grubs Eskline, that represents tremendous value for money. If you're looking for a pair, keep an eye out on the Grubs Warehouse website and sit tight for one of their seasonal flash sales to get them at the £30 price point. I have to say, I'd pay a lot more for wellies that keep my feet toastie during winter fishing. Even at £120, if you can find the Snowline 12.5 in Europe, they are worth considering for more northern Norwegian adventures. ■

FEATURES

- **Insuated and suitable for temperatures between -40° c and +10° c.**
- **Tough textured nylon outer face with 5mm neoprene, a layer of highloft airflow membrane, and a fleece lining which allows you to remain outdoors for hours.**
- **Underfoot chassis™ gives a sure-footed platform**
- **Traxion™ outsole - oil resistant.**
- **Small lugs for maximum purchase and large lugs help propel the foot forward.**
- **Nitrocell™ footbed – a million microscopic nitrogen bubbles provides a soft cushioning for an athletic shoe feel that insulates the wearer from cold surfaces.**
- **Insufoam-ultra™ neoprene with calf height rubber for comfort and warmth.**
- **Hexzorb™ technology absorbs heel strike shock for daylong comfort.**
- **Superdri™ lining – hard-wearing, fungus and rot proof, wicks moisture away from the wearer's foot to prevent a sweaty and uncomfortable feel.**
- **Unique Hard Toe™ technology with reinforced toecap and heel that protects the wearer during daily activities.**

- **RRP: £99**
- **www.grubswarehouse.com**

Words and photography by LIAM GUNN

FEATURES

- Bearings 8 x stainless A-RB + 1 roller bearing
- Super slow oscillation
- Spare spool
- Machined aluminium handle
- Retrieve 4.3:1
- 20kg max drag
- Capacity 330yd x 20lb
- Weight 505g

- RRP £419.99

THE 14000 XSC – ONE MINT AERO

Liam Gunn tests the latest model from Shimano's Power Aero range of fixed spool reels

Reigning supreme at the apex when it comes to crafting lightweight, high-quality reels capable of handling anything the diverse UK coastline could throw up is Shimano. Upon catching wind of a new offering from them, my attention was piqued - much like the ears of a faithful old dog at the mere mention of the word "walk".

Having used predecessors within the established Power Aero series, I couldn't help but wonder how this fresh addition would compare to its older counterparts and other reels within Shimano's expertise-laden range.

Driven by an almost obsessive curiosity, I embarked on a quest to get hold of one, eventually securing it for a thorough workout. Unboxing the reel, I was met with sheer joy as I discovered that Shimano had listened - the spare spool accompanying the Aero 14000 XSC was an exact match to the one already on the reel. This marks a departure from the norm where spare spools typically have a different fit and finish. Both spools, configured in the hybrid style to accommodate both braid and monofilament, are capable of holding an impressive 300m of 0.45mm line. This generous capacity ensures it can be used in the very deepest waters along the UK shoreline and beyond, with ample reserve for a long run from a specimen fish!

For enthusiasts of fine braids or tapered monofilament lines, the inclusion of spool spacers is a thoughtful touch. With options in both 6,000 and 10,000 sizes, this proves especially handy when dealing with fine diameter lines, eliminating the need for an excessive amount additional backing that would never see the light of day. The reel exudes quality, featuring a distinctive two-tone finish that makes it stand out from the more polished aesthetics of some other surf reels. The solid aluminium Hagane body, coupled with rigid cast technology, instils unwavering confidence during battles with large fish and when power-casting substantial baits and leads. Remarkably, this technology eliminates any movement at the reel seat, a surprising feature considering the reel's focus on distance surf casting rather than handling large fish and rough terrain.

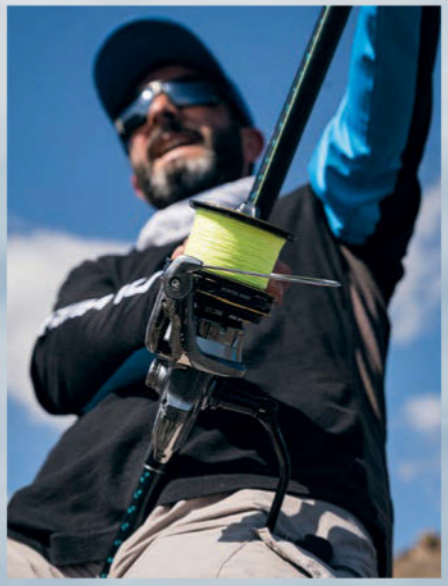
ON TEST

In action, the reel surpasses expectations, delivering that quintessential Shimano smoothness. Crafted with precision, the Shimano team has minimised rattling, weaknesses and moving parts, resulting in a buttery smooth, silent retrieve.

The XSC 14000 boasts a significantly enhanced pinion gearing, complementing the drive gear to ensure perfect alignment at all times. This allows you to effortlessly winch large fish under immense pressure without hesitation. Think rays, eels and tope! This reel will cope with each and ask for more!

The reel's robust sealing throughout the body makes it highly water-resistant. Featuring a distinctly different layout compared to its predecessors, the reel minimises water ingress by reducing the amount of screws and plates on the reel body.

A standout feature is the quick-drag mechanism, allowing for swift adjustments from a light-set drag to a stern fighting drag in a few clicks. Remarkably, the reel boasts an impressive 20kg of drag - a force capable of pulling the average angler off their feet, a testament to its incredible prowess. Throughout extensive testing, I pushed the reel to its limits in various environments - from shallow sandy bays with fine braids and tapered leaders, to blasting out large fish baits in rugged grounds after specimen cod.



The Power Aero XSC not only met, but exceeded, my expectations in every scenario. I have been able to lift fish up the side of rock ledges and bully fish back through the harshest of ground with a new-found confidence in this light weight offering. Considering that my bread and butter is rough ground fishing with reels that are twice the weight, I am still in shock at how well the Aero XSC stacks up against the more robust options in my ever-growing reel collection - I might never look at them the same way! I can tell you that there is marked improvement in fatigue comparing the XSC to a standard rough ground fixed spool, particularly during those long sessions. The XSC weighs approximately half as much as what I'm used to - it almost feels like there isn't a reel clamped to the rod at times!

VALUE?

While the pricing of the Power Aero may put some off, it stands as a testament to the old adage that you get what you pay for. The flawless line lay, overall aesthetics and the juxtaposition of lightweight yet robust construction makes this reel a unique investment for the prospective specimen angler. Packed with features typically found in higher-end models, like the Technium Mgs, it's hard to dispute the extraordinary value offered by the incredible new Power Aero XSC. ■

Words and photos by MARK SLATER

DIGGING DEEP IN DOMBURG

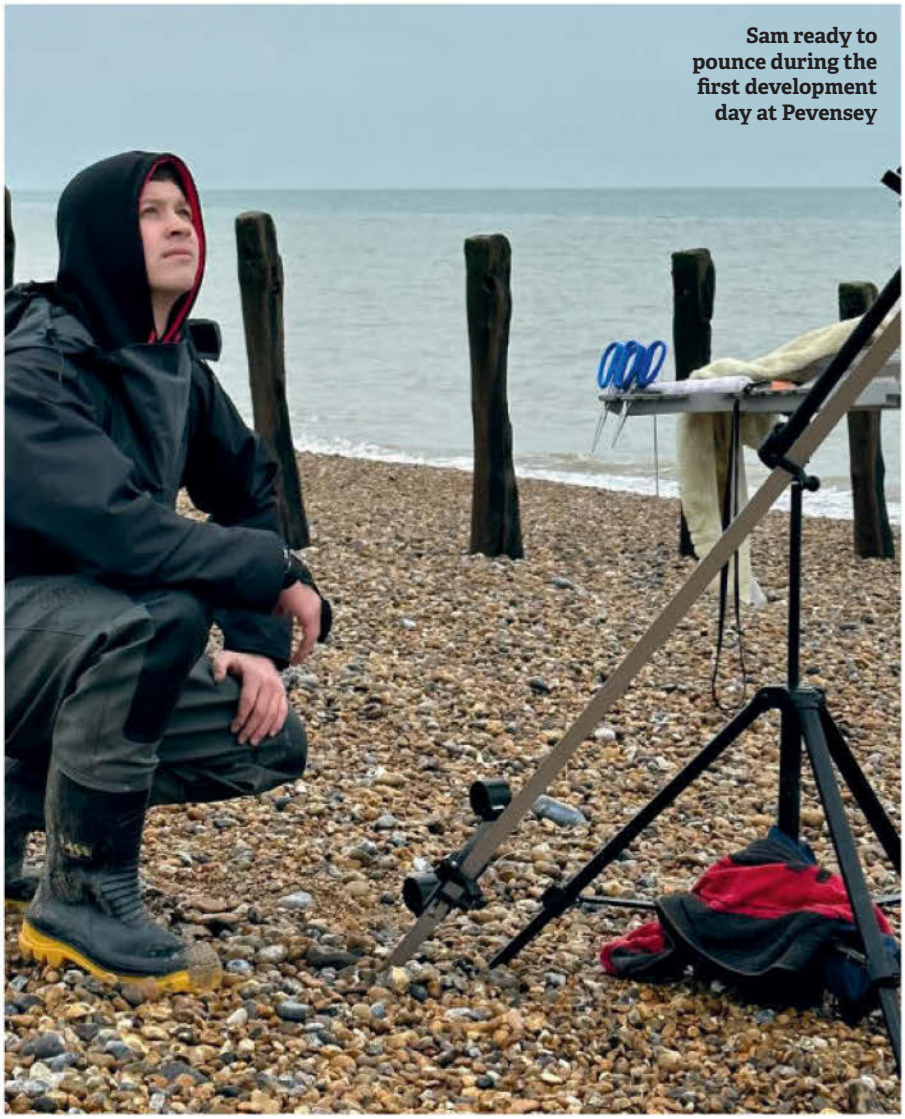
England under 21 team manager Mark Slater reports back on the team's heroics in Holland at the shore fishing World Championships

GROUNDHOG DAY

4:56am and the alarm on my phone was angrily confirming that it was Groundhog Day once more. I needed to get out of bed and wake up the rest of the squad. I practically fell out of the cramped caravan style bedroom and, bleary eyed, looked outside; cold, rain, pitch black and strong easterly winds were already blowing leaves off the surrounding trees.

"What on earth am I doing here?" I muttered and then went up the stinky end of the accommodation, climbing over the mountain of tackle boxes and part made rig man-traps.

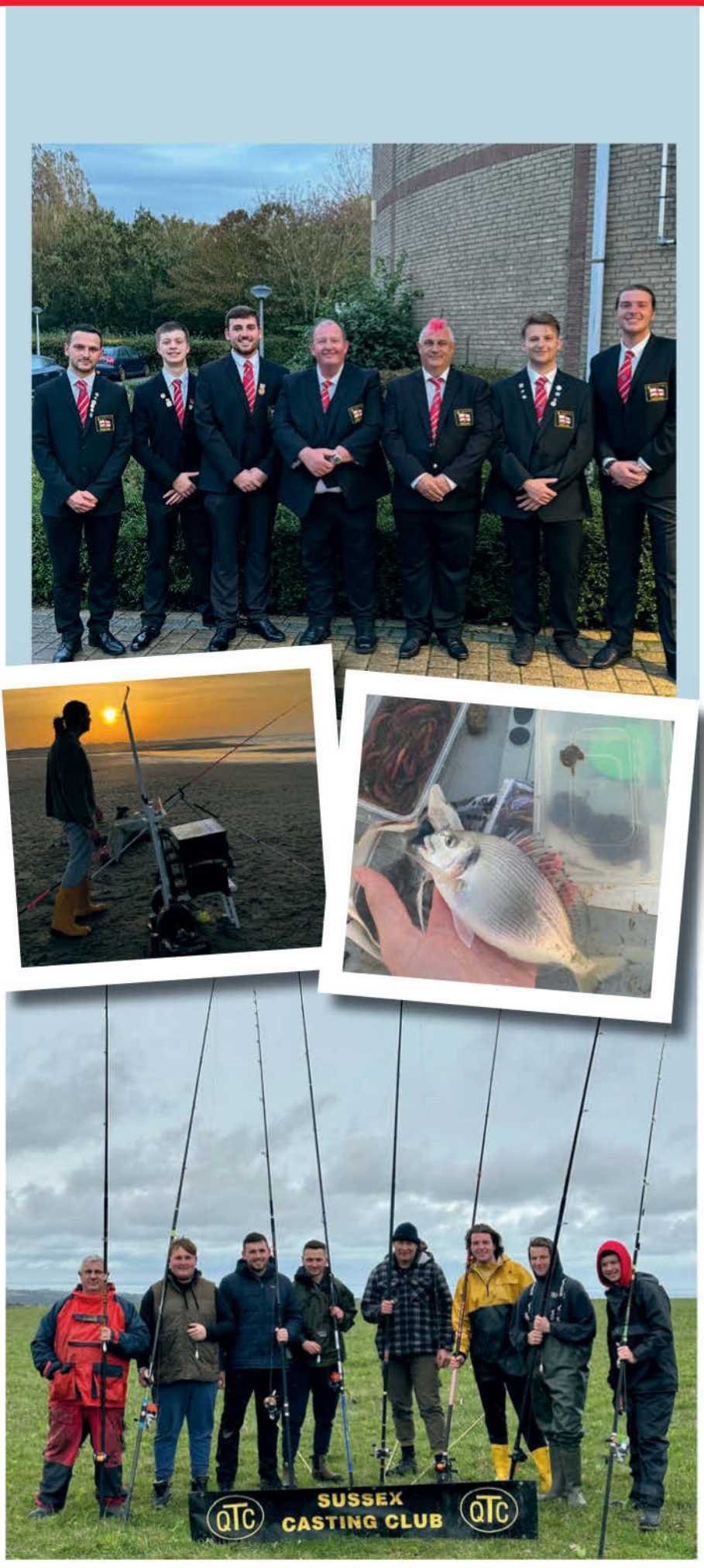
It was just day six of the practice week before the World Championship shore fishing competition and we were already beyond knackered. Well, I was anyway. The lads in the five man U21 squad all had the exuberance of youth and every time we made plans to fish, they were like excited puppies being shown a bone for the very first time.



Sam ready to pounce during the first development day at Pevensey

THE PREPARATION

This was the culmination of a year long preparation for the Fips M Shore Fishing World Championships, being held out in Domburg, Holland. The Angling Trust selection committee had chosen both the applicants for the U21 squad as well as the Team Manager almost a year before the event took place. The five man squad were all tasked with making up over a hundred rigs in various formats, with the benefit of advice from some of the other England Team members who had previously fished out in Holland. Making up a hundred rigs is a ball-ache by any standards, but clip down rigs with a very tight tolerance and a lot of detail is next level difficult; however, that is what is required in order to compete at this



The squad members with the casting field organiser, Neil, in the centre

standard. There were three Development Days which were predominantly team-building events and progress checks for the rigs and kit each squad member was required to accumulate. The first event was held at Pevensey in Sussex in February, which turned out to be a bitterly cold day out on the beach, culminating in a four hour fish-off for the lads. Despite all their best efforts, only one undersized bass was landed and Tom Ryder, the captor, not only earned the bragging rights for the day, but also £75 worth of vouchers.

The second event was not even close to the sea. A private casting session was organised with the Sussex Casting Club on another very wet and blustery day. The court was set up and each squad member was tasked with casting various sized leads using both multiplier set-ups as well as continental rod/fixed spool outfits. Once plain leads had been cast, each lad was then asked to cast out jellyworm baited rigs, to simulate casting with baited rigs. All their distances were recorded and analysed.

The third event was another tough meeting for the lads. It was held at the Ship & Lobster in Gravesend, a venue renown for losing tackle if you cast out over the Kent Ledge. It was chosen to be a tackle and lad tester in equal measures as the venues out in Holland all had nasty ledges at distance. Essentially, the lads were tasked with casting out into the ledge to get snagged up and then test their outfits, leader knots and brute strength when trying to recover the anchored rigs. Despite losing gear, the lads all managed to catch bass and it was our final meet up before travelling out to the World Championships.

AND SO IT BEGAN

A convoy of lads and dads left England well before the crack of dawn the week before the championships were due to start. Some of the lads had gone digging the night before in order to take fresh bait out to use for the practice week. During the championship matches bait packs are provided to each angler. We were armed with a brochure for the event and we had been advised that there were five different venues that we would need to "learn" which would be used for the matches.

The vans were loaded up to the roof with all the kit that each angler would need to take and possibly use. The checklist for James included 12 rods, six multipliers, 12 fixed spools and 20 plus spare fixed spools, all loaded with various diameter lines and leaders. On top of this were the two huge boxes of spare line, rig making kit, fishing trolley, tripods and sand spikes. As we went through the Eurotunnel customs check we all breathed a huge sigh of relief as we were dreading having to try and unpack the back of the van and try to explain all the contents to a Border Force agent.

The van got quieter on the long drive through France and the Netherlands as the task ahead of us suddenly grew real.

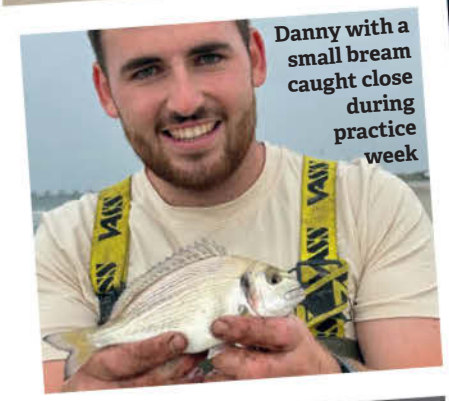
THE GRUELLING PRACTICE WEEK

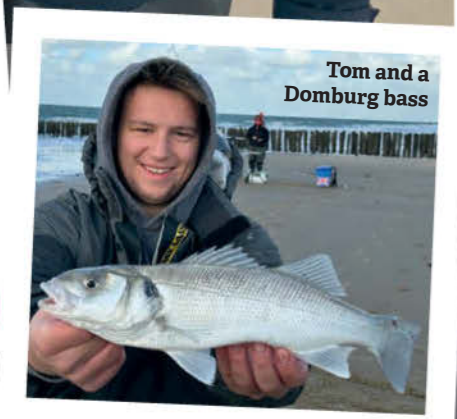
The World Championship brochure advised that the matches would all be held during daylight and essentially over low water. The problem we faced during the practice week was that the corresponding tides were all very early morning or late at night, when the fishing could be totally different to the daytime. There was no alternative, we would need to get up before it got light and fish the first of the flood just as dawn broke and then return to each venue early evening and fish the tide down and over low water until we lost the light.

Each day during practice week consisted of getting up before 5am, donning headlights and all the fishing gear and driving to the venues in order to try and learn everything we could about each venue. Were the fish close in feeding in the surf? Were there any fish at distance? Did the tide affect the fish feeding? What rigs worked best in close and also at distance? What bait worked best, out of the proposed bait packs for each state of tide and distance? The variables were almost endless but the practice time was severely limited. It was going to be a matter of making the best judgement we could with the time available to us.

At the end of the frantic five practice days the squad was almost worn out before the Championships had even started. We had fished 10 sessions and covered all the match venues, gaining huge amounts of knowledge about each one. Worryingly, it was October, but the weather had been abnormally mild and we had not seen a single whiting in any of our sessions. We had, in fact, encountered a lot of species you would not normally associate with an autumnal championship and the vast majority had been caught close in due to the onshore breeze and surfy conditions. We had caught small turbot, golden grey mullet and gilthead bream as well as a few flounder and bass.

A small turbot caught in the surf


Danny with a small bream caught close during practice week


Tom and a Domburg bass

A CHANGE OF WEATHER; A CHANGE OF VENUES; A CHANGE OF RULES

Two days before the official start of the World Championship programme we had earmarked the squad for a couple of "down days" to give the lads a breather, let them rebuild damaged rigs and clean down their kit. However, one of our squad happened to take a peek at the Dutch Federation website and there appeared to be a change of venues. Nothing had been communicated to any of the eight nations competing and we were astounded that the proposed venues may have been changed without any consultation. There was no alternative, we would need to get up early and fish another venue and very quickly try to learn everything about that extra venue in one early tide.

Another 5am start, but this time the weather had also changed. The hitherto mild weather was giving way to a cold front and, to make matters worse, it had been raining continuously since about midnight. We now all looked like bona fide Minions dressed in waterproofs and headlights blazing as we ventured out to the new venue. Gnarly was an understatement. The wind was now blowing rain horizontally along the beach; it had changed direction by 90 degrees overnight.

The lads fished their hearts out for a solid four hours, but it had suddenly become a lot harder to locate the fish and in amongst the flounder and bass a solitary whiting had been caught. Had the winter fish started to appear? It was almost impossible to analyse this one session and try to fathom out the changes, but we were now out of time. The official programme was upon us.

There was an opening ceremony and a march through Domburg to undertake as part and parcel of the event.

The next day was the first captains' meeting which all the managers had to attend and listen intently to the organisers to find out if there were any amendments to the published brochure. The changes came thick and fast, as did the protests from the other competing nations. At one point it was an uproar and order had to be called several times. Due to the change in the weather, the venues were going to be changed and lots of the nations were up in arms that they had not been notified during practice week.

On top of that, the organisers were planning to change some of the Fips M competing rules – cue more uproar and shouts for order. After several hours and multiple 180 degree changes in proposals, the venues and the rules for the matches were agreed, but it did mean that one of the venues we had spent two tides learning was no longer going to be a match venue. The rules and the matches seemed to be changing almost as fast as the blessed weather!

MATCH TIME

Day one of the World Championships is deemed the official practice day: the results do not count, but it is used to iron out any wrinkles, and boy was there a shed load of wrinkles that day!

As we collected our designated bait packs in the car park, one of the organisers shouted out that in accordance with the Fips M antidoping regulations one person from each team would be selected for testing. He then advised that if selected, that angler would need to immediately leave the beach under supervision and be taken to a testing venue to provide a sample. Our lads knew that this might happen, but were not aware that they would have to leave all their gear on the beach for somebody else to pack away and cart back to the accommodation. This put them on edge as some of them had over £10,000 worth of rods, reels and kit ready to deploy onto the beach. However, with little option we pressed on and advised the lads that the team managers would sort this out; but it had unsettled them already.

The beach was pegged out and our five man squad all made their way to their allocated positions on the beach. However, there was a huge problem, a surf club was situated right in the middle of the roped out venue and there were already half a dozen surfers having lessons. Surfers and anglers is an oil and water mixture at the best of times.

We tried to make the best of it, but the surfers were tearing up the water right in front of one of our squad members and several rods had been pulled out of the tripods. Tensions were mounting, one of the surfers came ashore and started a fight and the police were called. Two hours into the official practice match and it was called off by the Fips M official who stated that it was getting too dangerous for the competitors.

It also turned out that only one person from the whole match was going to be randomly selected for drug testing and not one person from each team. As luck would have it, it was one of our lads. The testing was not an issue, but packing up all his kit and transporting it back to the van was a bit of a test of our logistics, luckily we were well supported by the dads.

The captains' meeting that evening after the practice day was another furore, with a lot of the managers expressing their frustration at the organisers. The results were also issued for the day and Team England had come last by a long way. At least these results did not count towards the Championship. ▶

"The changes came thick and fast, as did the protests from the other competing nations. At one point it was an uproar and order had to be called several times"

Practising in the dark on a snaggy venue – the weather had turned gnarly

THE FOUR-DAY OFFICIAL MATCH

We had our evening team meeting after the disastrous opening day one practice event. The lads were all down. The event had been poorly organised, poorly stewarded, there had been fisticuffs with the surfers and it had been abandoned. Several of our lads had effectively been unable to fish and James had only been able to watch surfers performing stunts in his peg and had only cast out twice in the two hours.

On top of this, the weather had changed further still and the onshore wind had now turned a full 180 degrees, it was now completely offshore and decidedly cooler. We decided to stick to our practice tactics and fish in close to try and pick up fish along the edge as we had caught very little at distance, other than the nasty tackle hungry ledge that lurked out there about 150 yards out.

Official match day one was soon upon us and we were up again at 5am as bait packs were being issued just after 6am for an 8:30am whistle start. The 21 degree balmy weather we had experienced in our practice match had now vanished and it was just 5 degrees and drizzling. Would this affect the fishing? We were not really sure as the practice day had been a shambles and had been abandoned without some of our lads even wetting a line.

An hour into the match and we realised it had all gone hideously wrong. There were no fish in the edge and some teams were using ultra fine braid and Portuguese type plain leads and fishing at extreme distance. They were catching whiting and dabs, fish that had eluded us all week during practice. We changed tactics and went out at distance, but as soon as the finish whistles were blown we knew that we were well behind. We had to wait for the captains' meeting that evening to find out how far behind we were. It was a very quiet and sullen trip back to the accommodation after match day one.

The lads and our assistant manager, Mark Preston, went straight back to the accommodation to gear up for a complete change of tactic for day two. I headed for the captains' meeting to hear the results of day one. Team England were in sixth position, which meant we had a task ahead of us now.

Day two was upon us. With a change of venue the wind had dropped out with zero surf up and down the beach. The fishing conditions had changed dramatically since our practice week and it was hard to comprehend how the same venues could fish so differently in the course of just a few days.

The lads battled hard on the second day but several of the other nations were using the ultrafine braid and plain leads, essentially casting uptide right over our lads and then pulling them in relentlessly. The stewards were advised, but unfortunately there was

James on practice day one with an armada of surfers in his peg – it was unfishable !

very little action and our lads were being pulled in time after time, often having their line damaged or cut by the braid.

There were very few fish caught in the entire match. Several of our lads had just one fish and these were undersized so counted for just 1 point. However, in some zones that undersized one point fish gained you a very valuable 3rd place. It was another incredibly tough match with our lads being noticeably affected by the other nations who were effectively uptiding with braid.

At the captains' meeting that evening I brought up the out of peg casting and was advised that the stewards would be looking out for this on day three; however when the results came out, Team England had dropped back a position to seventh place. Very rarely do teams manage to climb back from this position, but when we had our squad meeting that evening we all agreed that we needed to go up a gear and go for broke.

DAY THREE

Day three was all too soon upon us and we were all aching. There were blisters on feet to pop and minor cuts on fingers that had to be glued before the bait pack presentation. The starting whistle sounded and from the off our lads were on fire! They were literally sprinting up and down the beach, winding in and recasting like well oiled machines. The thought of being in second to last position and the pep-talk from the night before had put them into an overdrive gear.

The stewards had already informed several of the plain lead wielding competitors to

James baiting up rigs on his competition trolley

switch to grip leads and to also cast more in their own pegs. Our lads were not getting tangled up as often and we were now actually fishing properly.

The mood on the trip back to camp was a lot more buoyant; the lads had performed superbly and we were pretty sure that this would be reflected in the results when they came in. Mark and the lads all stormed back to the accommodation to spend several hours relining reels, retying rigs and preparing for the final match day.

Meanwhile, up in the captains' meeting, the results were being calculated and there on the screen was the result that we needed – Team England had come first on Day three! Moreover, we had climbed up two

places to fifth position overall. Could we dare hope for a miracle on the last day?

DAY FOUR

Day four and the forecast was horrendous: it was definitely going to rain all day, and it did! Once again, from the off, our lads were noticeably quicker in everything that they were doing compared to the competition. It was absolutely belting down and within 15 minutes everybody was drenched. It was like standing in a car wash with somebody on the jetwash in your face for good measure.

Some of the other nations just could not cope with the wind and the rain while our lads were heads down and just getting on with the job. The final whistle blew and we had no idea how we had fared as the hour boards that were updated in each zone had been washed clean. We thought we had done ok. The lads and our assistant manager went back to base camp to wash down and get ready for the closing ceremony while I went up to the captains' meeting and anxiously waited for the results to be calculated. Almost two hours, and several sets of fingernails, later the results button had been pressed and the big screen in the meeting room flashed into life.

We had come second on the last day. This was an excellent result and testament to the five lads who probably had trench foot from the day's proceedings. Next came the overall championship positions and the tension in the room was palpable; you could have heard a pin drop.

Suddenly my back was being slapped. It wasn't because I was choking. It was virtually impossible, but Team England were up there in third position, just behind Spain and Italy. In fact just one point short of silver.

I quickly telephoned my assistant, Mark, who had gathered our squad together in our small caravan and were all nervously sat around waiting for the call. Through all the shouting, hollering and jumping up and down that ensued, I just heard Mark instructing me to hurry up back to get washed and changed. We would need to spruce up a bit for a podium presentation.

What an evening that was! We were presented with medals and a trophy and the lads never stopped beaming the entire time. A huge thank you goes to the five lads who, without exaggeration, put their lives on hold for almost a year to prepare and participate. They were the true stars. They battled on and never gave up, even when the odds were truly stacked against them. A massive thank you must also go to the parents who also gave up their time to transport the lads, help out with hauling untold amounts of kit up and down sand dunes to the venues. A big thank you to the Angling Trust for their part in allowing team England to participate. I don't really need to thank my assistant manager, Mark Preston, because after 40 years of being my best mate, he just knows. ■

"Next came the overall championship positions and the tension in the room was palpable; you could have heard a pin drop"

Are you interested in participating or do you know a budding young angler?

Please contact the Angling Trust which runs an exceptional Talent Pathway scheme for young anglers and are always after new recruits.

Interview by
TIM MACPHERSON

NEW SERIES

LIVING LEGENDS

John Holden is well known to generations of Sea Angler readers having written for the magazine since 1972. A word champion distance caster he is hugely respected within the sea angling community both here in the UK and overseas. A biomedical scientist by training, John has spent many years as a tackle development consultant. He's featured in US magazines, on television, has written many books and has his own YouTube channel. He was one of the first people to cast 200 yards. In tribute to his contribution to sea angling Tim Macpherson takes a look at his life in angling.

SA: You've been involved in sea fishing for a long time – what got you hooked on it all those years ago?

JH: My grandad taught me to coarse fish on the River Trent. Then I switched to beach fishing when the family moved to Suffolk. Since we lived close to Bawdsey, sea fishing seemed the natural choice. The cod boom began when I was a teenager and like so many others I got hooked on the sport.

SA: What was it that encouraged you to take up tournament casting?

JH: Catching cod meant learning to cast a long way, and that was my focus. Encouraged by the great Leslie Moncrieff, we younger fishermen felt restricted by the old beach ways and began working on our own ideas which eventually morphed into the tackle and methods used today.

Since the distances we fished at rivalled existing tournament records, we entered a few competitions. Truth is, though, we hated the old-time tackle rules and so we formed the UKSF and brought the tackle specifications into line with our everyday beach gear. Using the same tackle for beach and field certainly contributed to casting's overwhelming popularity.

SA: You won your first tournament in 1969, but along with that what do you regard as your greatest achievement in angling and beach casting?

JH: In 1969 Terry Carroll and I won the old school BCA national championships with new record 6oz multiplier casts just shy of the "impossible" 200 yard mark. Terry cast as a professional, I as amateur. We enjoyed massive coverage in national newspapers, TV and radio. Everyone wanted a slice of the action – tackle makers, angling press and, of course, hundreds of thousands of anglers hell bent on catching cod.

So far as my achievements go, that is for others to judge. I like to think that the small group of us who started the ball rolling have played a part in what amounts to a revolution in beach fishing over the past decades.

SA: You are generally regarded as a casting "guru" because of your regular articles in Sea Angler, your YouTube videos and your tournament casting, but apart from this what kind of sea angling do you prefer?

JH: Any old beach fishing suits me. It's great to catch big fish in exotic places, but a few whiting from Bawdsey, where it all began, is perfectly all right with me.

You can spend a lifetime looking for the Holy Grail at the cost of missing out on the pleasures of your own back yard.

SA: You were (one of) the first to cast 200 yards – what is your longest ever cast and was this on a beach or in a tournament field?

JH: My longest officially recorded cast was 252 yards on North Carolina's Outer Banks in the 1980s. The distance was confirmed by surveyors from the state's weights and measures office.

I was using an 11ft 6in Fenwick surf rod, slightly modified Penn 970 reel, 0.40mm main line, 50lb leader and 5oz sinker.

SA: You've worked with a lot of brands advising on and developing rods and reels – what got you into this? And what would you regard as your most significant contribution?

JH: Success in fishing and casting attracts many offers, most of which mean selling your soul for a handful of tackle. My involvement with the trade has actually been quite limited. I shall always be grateful to Barrie Welham of Mitchell Reels who helped me hugely in the early days, with no strings attached. My later association with Penn reels, Fenwick Rods and Stren line was excellent and highly professional. Again, success or otherwise is for others to judge.

SA: You've tested many rods and reels over the years – do you have a favourite combination for tournament casting and angling?

JH: Back in the day, all of us used whatever we could lay our hands on for fishing and competition. That often meant making our own rods and sometimes our own reels. When good stuff arrived, including the high-performance UK rods we use today, I went overboard with the rest of the casters looking for the magic rod and

"What you still can't buy is the effort and commitment that separates good anglers and casters from the rest"

reel combo that produced miracles. It didn't exist and never will. Eventually I went back to ordinary off-the-shelf gear. A medium-quick rod about 13ft long and armed with a decent CT multiplier is all I need.

SA: What are the most significant changes to beach casting tackle and techniques you have witnessed over the years?

JH: These days you can go into a tackle shop, spend a relatively modest amount and walk out with tackle that my generation would have killed for when we began. There is a wealth of guidance on casting and fishing methods. What you still can't buy is the effort and commitment that separates good anglers and casters from the rest.

SA: Which is your best or favourite competition win?

JH: It has to be the 1969 BCA Championships.

SA: Who would you regard as the best tournament caster you've competed with or worked alongside?

JH: On distance alone there would be a list – the record list. Taking everything into account, though, it's an impossible question for me. I have learned from and been impressed by literally thousands of casters here and overseas. Every single person who enters a tournament gives 100 per cent regardless of how far the cast flies. And there is no lonelier place than the oche when it's your turn to cast. It takes nerve just to be there. In that sense we are all equal.

SA: Fixed spool or multiplier? And why?

JH: Multipliers. I suffered a long and painful apprenticeship with them, and once I'd got to grips with the beast I've never wanted for more. On the other hand, a modern fixed spool is a great reel and probably a wiser choice for many people.

SA: Do you use different tackle when pleasure/ match fishing (as opposed to tournament casting?

JH: In my heyday I used the same gear for tournaments as for fishing simply because I had nothing else. Like most of the lads, later on I had separate rods for field and beach mainly because all-out tournament rods are awful for fishing. I have never fished a match so can't comment on that aspect of the sport.

SA: Name your favourite/ best casting or fishing venue and your favourite angling/ achievements?

JH: Orford Island in Suffolk, and Cape Hatteras in the US. Best UK session was three cod totalling over 75lb one night at East Lane, Suffolk. Owing to extreme lack of time during a working tour of Maine, I had only one cast from the beach. I landed a 52lb striped bass. Lucky or what?

SA: What advice would you give to young anglers coming into the sport - both fishing generally and if they are showing promise in beach casting?

JH: Angling is a sport, a pastime, a hobby. Fishing and casting are not a do-or-die challenge, and in the greater scheme of things they are essentially trivial. Yes, you have to work at it to be any good. But keep a sense of perspective and enjoy them for what they are even if you fancy yourself as a world champion.

SA: What is the biggest challenge you see for angling in the future?

JH: Attracting enough people into the sport, youngsters especially. I don't know how you do that, but maintaining healthy seas and a decent level of fish stocks is obviously part of it.

SA: If you could only fish one venue or target one fish species only what would that be?

JH: Big cod from Orford Island. Dream on! ■

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2024 PENN

SEA LEAGUE

The latest results from Britain's biggest event for shore match anglers

KING SAUL SEALS 2023 TITLE

Congratulations to Saul Page from Kent for winning the 2023 Penn sponsored Shore Sea League with an impressive 123 points. Congratulations also go to all competitors in last year's hard-faught league. The top 15 anglers will receive prize vouchers from Penn. The top 45 anglers will be invited to fish this year's final being held at Weybourne on the private beach located at the Muckleburgh Collection, North Norfolk, on 20th April 2024. Hosts are the North Norfolk Angling Club, more details to follow.

The leader board below lists all anglers who are registered and have scored points for the year 1st January to, and including, 31st December 2023. The final standings take into account the maximum 12 scores allowed for the year. This year 294 matches were registered and 18,020 anglers took part!

1st	Saul Page	Deal	123	£2000
2nd	George Smith	Grimsby	90	£1500
3rd	Shane Russell	Old Colwyn	79	£1000
4th	Neil Cutler	Gateshead	65	£500
5th	Alan Price	Rhyl	63	£500
6th	Sam Collier	Deal	58	£500
7th	Ben Arnold	Brighton	57	£500
8th	Joe Wales	Shoreham	57	£500
9th	Gavin Owen	Consett	50	£500
10th	Nathan Elliott	Dover	49	£500
11th	Simon Drayton	Gainsborough	49	£200
12th	Rob Tuck	Holland on Sea	48	£200
13th	Ged Stevens	Barrow in Furness	47	£200
14th	Paul Medd	Scarborough	47	£200
15th	Philip A Lee	Sussex	47	£200

16	Dave Shorthouse	Kettering	44
17	Tom Wells	Deal	44
18	Darren Bond	Lancing	42
19	Gareth Griffiths	Bar in Fur	42
20	Julian Shambrook	Torquay	42
21	Shaun Tucker	Swansea	41
22	Darren Newland	Ryde	39
23	Shaun Moore	Cardiff	39
24	Henry Randell	Bodham	38
25	David O'Sullivan	Tralee	37
26	Joe Plumstead	PevBay	35
27	Tony Roberts	Holyhead	35
28	Ben Bradstock	Honiton	33
29	Dave Dai Llewelyn	Barry	33
30	Chris O'Sullivan	Tralee	32
31	Colin Carey	Worthing	32
32	Jim Morris	Chester	32
33	Lee Smith	Hull	31
34	Lloyd Summer	Caerphilly	31
35	Adrian Bordianu	Taverham	30
36	Simon Springell	Watchet	30
37	Ian Nelson	Grimsby	29
38	Wayne Davidson	Thornton	29
39	Andrew Dugdale	Peel	28
40	Chris Jones	Porthcawl	28
41	Chris Read	Cardiff	28
42	Colin Crosby	Hastings	28
43	Garry Hutson	Cleethorpes	28
44	Ben Shepherd	Maryport	27
45	Daniel Crump	Barry	27
46	Steve Potts	Gosforth	27
47	Andy Crowe	Scarborough	26
48	Tony Thomas	Sheringham	26
49	W McGilloway	Greenfield	26
50	Gareth Gardiner	Sunderland	25
51	Richard Yates	St MargBay	25
52	Steve Adams		25
53	Bill Lindfield	Greasby	24
54	Lee Caley	Woodbridge	24
55	M Cruickshank	Port Talbot	23
56	Peter Evans	Swansea	22
57	Rory Jenkins	Tonyfrail	22
58	Chris Equall	Cardiff	21
59	Chris Horn	Kirkcaldy	21
60	Dai Loder	Cwmbran	21
61	Paul Stevens	Worthing	21
62	Rob Marshall	Taunton	21
63	Bob Gascoigne	Cramlington	20
64	Cameron Turner	Felixstowe	20
65	Carl Campion	Swansea	20
66	Craig Buy	Colchester	20
67	Dave Delaney	Walker	20
68	Mike Coates	Hull	20
69	Nicky Robson	Wallsend	20
70	Roy Tapper	Cardiff	20
71	Scott Moore	Hartlepool	20
72	Steve Bonner	Wallasey	20
73	Steve Williams	Jarrow	20
74	Brett Cotter	London	19
75	Chris Stephens	Bridgend	19
76	James Barker	Clevedon	19
77	Troy Francis	Killarney	19
78	Darren Brooks	Hastings	18
79	Gary Parsons	Bridgend	18
80	Kevin Warner	Horncastle	18
81	Paul Parsons	Eastbourne	18
82	Scott Davies	Abergele	18
83	Adam Johnson	South Shields	17
84	Barry Diaper	Stowmarket	17
85	Billy Buckley	Glasgow	17
86	Chi Cheung		17
87	Dave Lovelock	Salisbury	17
88	Garry Reid	Isle of Man	17
89	Ian Bowell	Ipswich	17
90	Steve Roberts	Cardiff	17
91	Alby Allan	South Shore	16
92	Bevan Self	Gt Yarmouth	16
93	Darren Browne	South Shields	16
94	DG Hutchinson	Morecambe	16
95	Lee Edwards	Liverpool	16
96	Matt Frost	Woodbridge	16
97	Richard Gormley	Courtown	16
98	Stephen Hoskins	Swansea	16
99	Craig Bradshaw	Ipswich	15
100	Darren Pashby	Driffield	15

Fiachra Cronin	Tralee Bay	15
Gary Wood	Holyhead	15
Jon Wade	Peel	15
Matt Malia	Rotherham	15
Mick Tapsell	Folkestone	15
Mike Kyle	Easthouses	15
Till Hall	Bath	15
Tommy Tate	Sunderland	15
Alun Price	Neath	14
Dave Bowering	Cardiff	14
Dave Hutchinson	Blackpool	14
Jordan Hunter	Sunderland	14
Leigh Rogers	Milford Haven	14
Mark Rogers	Maidstone	14
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Daniel Parker	Wallasey	11
Dave Wade	Hove	11
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Pete Davis	Cork	10
Richard Dorgan	Bristol	10
Scott McCartney	Prestwick	10
Wayne Leason	Hull	10
Adam Davies	Llanelli	9
Alan Combe	Kirkcaldy	9
Billy Potter		9
Dave Wright	Southwold	9
Malcolm Stote	Lymington	9
Martin Humphries	Dover	9
Michael Mc	Glasgow	9
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Marian Spirea	London	8
Mark Colman	Hornsea	8
Mark Dewar	Stranraer	8
Mark Gooch	Lowestoft	8
Matthew Garbutt	Skelton	8
Noel Fogarty	Dublin	8
Paul Harrison	Aldeburgh	8
Peter Dunn	Scarborough	8
Stephen Glynn	Ballybrack	8
Steve Ingleston	Whitby	8
Stuart Cresswell	Ayr	8
Tony Owen	Wales	8
Adrian Ford	Weston-super-Mare	7
Billy Colling	Filey	7
Darren Cramer	Southampton	7
David Cooper	Edinburgh	7
Ian Marshall	Driffield	7
JP Molloy	Cork	7
Kevin Lewis	Dundee	7
Kevin Richardson	Burton	7
Martin Grossman	Westcliff on Sea	7
Mike Taylor	Eastleigh	7
Paul Denholm	Grimsby	7
Paul Kemp	Hull	7
Paul Simmons	Faversham	7
Paul Tuck	Maryport	7
Phil Cooper	Wallasey	7
Scott Blowman	Filey	7
Shane McMahon	Kerry	7
Steve Boyt	Felixstowe	7
Stuart Dewhurst	Preston	7
Chris France	Scarborough	6
Dan Mogridge	Portsmouth	6
Daniel Eagle	Leiston	6
Dave Loder	Newport	6
Don Cook	Barry	6
Gavin Parker	Wallasey	6
Ian Thompson	Scarborough	6
Jason Brown	Bridgwater	6
Jason Carter	Doddington	6
John Hopkins	Bridgend	6
Jon Richardson	Smeeton	6
Karl Nangle	Grimsby	6
Lewis Clark	Rochford	6
Mark Shortt	Bray SAC	6
Mike Treharne	Sleaford	6
Orry Turner	Isle of Man	6
Peter Hammond	Ferryside	6
Russell Preston	Bristol	6
Scott Busher	Port Talbot	6
Simon Phelps	Milford Haven	6
Steve Liddle	Watchet	6
Steve Price	Wallasey	6
Andrew Hutchings	Cardiff	5
Andy Gallagher	Beccles	5
Barry O'Rourke	Cork	5
Ben Butler	Maryport	5
Bruce Lawrence	Ipswich	5
Carl Edwards	Bootle	5
Chris Spall	Westleton	5
Dewi Parry	Gwalchmai	5
Dorian Harris	St Clears	5
Drew Ferguson	Larne	5
Franco Attanasio	Saundersfoot	5
Gethyn Owen	Penmearmawr	5
Jon Walsh	Widnes	5
Josh Collier	Hornsea	5
Kerry Saint	Hastings	5
Kevin Martland	New Brighton	5
Liam Roper	Aldeburgh	5
Matt Lay-Flurrie	Rendlesham	5
Nigel Putbrace	Cardiff	5
Paul Marshall	Corby	5
Paul Short	Guisborough	5
Richard Hughes	Anglesey	5
Simon Hogan	Maryport	5
Adam Cullingford	Crewkerne	4
Brogan Bayford	Bristol	4
Chris Isaac	Llanelli	4
Ciaran Fogarty	Dunn Brinn	4
Colin Bell	Newcastle	4
Darren Jones	Rhyl	4
Dave Lane	Weymouth	4
Heather Lindfield	Greasby	4
Ivor Smith	Rogerstone	4
Jake Wakeford Jnr	Portishead	4
Jason Banham	Ipswich	4
Keith Smith	Blyth	4
Leigh Davies	Porthcawl	4
Mark Davies	Wrexham	4
Mark Lamb	Ulverston	4
Matt White	Lancaster	4
Mike Hughes	Bangor	4
Rex Palmer	Hastings	4
Roger Cunnnigton	Cromer	4
Sam Creasey	Woodbridge	4
Terry Hartnell	Axminster	4
Tony Baxter	Clayton-le-Moors	4
Aidan O'Sullivan	Tralee	3
Alec Bell	Kilmarnock	3
Andy Hurcombe	Thanet	3
Andy Pasfield	Dundee	3
Becky Lee	Hythe	3
Billy Johnson	Deal	3
Brendan Wall	Wexford	3
Daniel Campbell	Arbroath	3
Dave Pinchbeck	Dartford	3
Eamonn Bermingham		3
George Dugdale	Peel	3
Ian Reynolds	South Benfleet	3
James Lane	Weymouth	3
Keith Bathgate	Edinburgh	3
Louie Smith	Deal	3
Mark Cousens	Bearsted	3
Mark Dyer	Deal	3
Mark Hurcombe	Deal	3
Mark Thomas	Scarborough	3
Mark Ward	Ipswich	3
Mike Watts	Fakenham	3
Neville Charlesworth	Hornsea	3
Nick May	Hastings	3
Phil Thomas	Bath	3
Rhys Lewis	Bridgend	3
Robert Stebbings	Aldeburgh	3
Stephen O'Donovan	Cork	3
Steve Ace	Bristol	3
Steve Swan	Herne Bay	3
Tom Dew	Llanelli	3
Alan Mulcahy	Waterford	2
Alan O'Dowling	Cork	2
Alfie Brown	Peterhead	2
Allan Hughes	Holyhead	2
Andrew Hunt	Runcorn	2
Andy Masden	Bristol	2
Andy Reeves	Sheerness	2
Andy Young	Lancaster	2
Brian McKenzie	Doncaster	2
Cliff Jones	Weston-S-M	2
Connie O'Sullivan	Kerry	2
Dave Morrell	Colwyn Bay	2
Ed Driver	Stonham	2
ary Medler	Marsham	2
Gordon Thornes	Connahs Quay	2
Ian Battle	Ipswich	2
Ian Dancey	Waterlooville	2
Jay Cityzen	Blackpool	2
Jimmy Connell	Glasgow	2
John Horsup	Ipswich	2
Keith Erridge	Eastbourne	2
Kevin Green	Norwich	2
Lee Brimfield		2
Lee Collins	Gillingham	2
Marc Viercant	Llandudno	2
Martin Lee	Thunderley	2
Mick Snelling	Selsey	2
Mike Topping	Loddon	2
Monty Burton	Scarborough	2
Ned Fitzpatrick	Kerry	2
Paul Storer	Ipswich	2
Pete Bauld	Baillingry	2
Ryan Blair	Larne	2
Shay O'Neill	Dublin	2
Simon Pattinson	Rosyth	2
Tam Borland	Ardrossan	2
Tom Whitehead	Maryport	2
Tony Irwin	Bristol	2
Adam Fellows	Burstwick	1
Billy Plumstead	Eastbourne	1
Chris Empson	Dunbar	1
Chris Snow	Worthing	1
Dave Radcliffe	Prestatyn	1
David Cargill	Inchture	1
Donna Bayford	Bristol	1
Eddie Ryder	Lancing	1
Ian Campbell	Falkirk	1
James Duncan	Brechin	1
James Waygood	Watchet	1
John Hepton	Washington	1
Kelly Jay Carter	Sussex	1
Kris Lindsay	Holyhead	1
Michael Hughes	Bangor	1
Neil Marsh	Herne Bay	1
Richard Lunn	Hornsea	1
Steve Smith	Whitehaven	1
Tom Ryder	Worthing	1
Tony Watters	Aberdeen	1

The monthly winner for December was Alan Price from Rhyl with a score of 24 points from two events.

WHAT'S ON

Your at-a-glance match events planner ● = Penn Sea League

FEBRUARY

● **3:** Mike and Chris's Winter Heaviest Cod League 2023/24, Carnoustie to Ferryden Lighthouse. Entry £10 for league payable on/prior to any event. Any cod caught in previous matches (in league) will not count unless entry paid prior to said match. Can join at 1st or 5th match or anytime in between. Individual Match entry £15 League 100% pay-out. Contact Chris on 07872944807

● **4:** Anglesey match anglers winter league, Holyhead Breakwater, fishing 2-7pm, measure everything except mackerel, herring, launce, set size for, dogfish 50cm, weever 10cm, any rays measured nose to tail, entry fee of £20. Entry into the league £40. Contact Dave Cave 07493149584

● **4:** Hornsea SAC Anyfish Anywhere open, fishing 9-3pm, scales down 4pm, entry £10 per angler, Juniors £5, Boundaries: Sewerby steps to Humber Bridge north bank. Tickets on the day from Lilys beach cafe, Marine Drive from 7.30am, pre-booking at Westlands angling Catwick. Enquiries john 07968215565, Mark 07768342169

● **9:** Edinburgh New Year Shore League, Newhaven, reg 6-6.15pm, fishing 7pm-10pm, pre-book only, contact Ian Campbell 07907805822

● **10:** Southern League round 2 of 12 & open, Friars Cliff 8-1am, pegged, measure & return, undersize fish count as 1oz, £15 match entry, £5 pools, £10 pair, team of five free, 2022 League entry £25, booking ends one hour before start, book only, Darren 07919 073232, Mike 07983 579596, Ian 07736 004714 or Ant 07775 691916. Nick: southernleagueandopens@gmail.com

● **10:** 2024 Porlock and Bossington series, Channel Anglers SAC, bait supplied only competition, all pegged and zoned, league entry £30 - 100% pay-out, entry £20 per match - 100% pay-out, bait £15 per match. Bait and draw 2pm, fishing 4-8pm.

● **11:** Fountain Open, Seabrook, Hythe Kent, 10-3pm, book-in at the Fountain PH from 6am, £30 entry, limited pegs. Contact Mark Rogers, via FB or 07770973062

● **11:** Holt SAC Norfolk Team Challenge Round 5, Kelling Tony 07780793141, thomasamt@btinternet.com Mike 07858758669, holtseaanglers@gmail.com

● **11:** Pembrokeshire RNLI Open, in aid of Tenby Lifeboat, £10 entry plus pairs pools, fishing 11:30-3:30pm, book in 9.30-11am at the Temple Bar Inn. John O'Connor 01834 8915, aardvet1@gmail.com10

● **11:** LSAC summer league 2024, Individual and Teams of 5 qualifiers and Opens, Oxwich 4:30-8:30pm pegged, SAMF length conversion table, Chris Isaac 07831308344

● **15:** David Neil Bait Supplies Midweek Shore League South Beach 7-10pm, for further details, booking pegs, or clarification please contact David Neil on 0778448100

● **17:** Alan Middleton Memorial, Mersey Cheshire Sea Anglers Community Club Vale Park/Kinglake, 3-7pm, 60 pegs, £20 entry, continental pay-out. Contact John Kerr, via email johnkerr68@icloud.com or Facebook messenger

● **17:** Yorkshire Federation of Sea Anglers, Withernsea, meet 10am, fishing 11-4pm, Keith Mumby 07340 758013 or via Facebook page, Yorkshire Federation of Sea Anglers. Keith: keithmumby@btinternet.com

● **23:** Edinburgh New Year Shore League, Portobello beach, Reg 6-6.15pm, fishing 7pm-10pm, pre-book only, contact Ian Campbell 07907805822

● **23:** Fishon Tackle Round 2 Eastney, 8-12pm, signing in 6pm till 7pm from soldier, pegged measure and release anything over 18cm, no bait restrictions, £10 member £12.50 non-members, back up venue for all matches is Eastney contact Ashley Dowdeswell 02394 007684 or 07807639872

● **24:** Samalite Chesil League round 1 of 10, Abbotsbury, 4-9pm, measure and release to the new SAMF chart for all species. Fish may be kept for the table or for bait but must be marked by snipping the tail after it has been recorded. No crab, including cart, whites or maddies. Pre-book only, Dave Lane 07977 132951 Dave Lane: lanedc@talktalk.net

● **24-25:** Pensarn, North Wales, fish Saturday 9-1pm, high water 2pm Sunday 9.15-1.15pm, pre-book Ben Price 07393201284, benplumb1992@gmail.com

PENN PLUS

● **25:** Kent Flounder League Allhallows 11.00-15.30pm, book-in ME3 9QD book in from 9am, measure and return, pre-book Ian 07791 234318

MARCH

● **1-3:** European Open Beach Championships (EOBC), 30th Year Anniversary, for more details visit eobc.co.uk.

● **3:** LSAC summer league 2024, Individual and Teams of 5 qualifiers and Opens, N Channel 2-4pm, pegged, SAMF length conversion table. Chris Isaac 07831308344

● **8:** Edinburgh New Year Shore League, Newhaven Reg 6-6.15pm, fishing 7pm-10pm, pre-book only, contact Ian Campbell 07907805822

● **8:** Fishon Tackle Round 3, Pagham 8-12pm, signing in 6-7pm from sandy road car park, pegged measure and release anything over 18cm, no bait restrictions, £10 member £12.50 non-members, back up venue for all matches is Eastney contact Ashley Dowdeswell 02394 007684 or 07807639872

● **9:** Yorkshire Federation of Sea Anglers, Easington 10.30-15.30pm, Keith Mumby 07340 758013 or via Facebook page, Yorkshire Federation of Sea Anglers. Keith: keithmumby@btinternet.com

● **9:** 2024 Porlock and Bossington series, Channel Anglers SAC, bait supplied only competition, all pegged and zoned, league entry £30 - 100% pay-out, entry £20 per match - 100% pay-out, bait £15 per match. Bait and draw 1pm, fishing 3-7pm

● **9-10:** Holt SAC East Coast Pairs Masters, Bacton and Kelling, Tony 07780793141, thomasamt@btinternet.com, Mike 07858758669, holtseaanglers@gmail.com

● **10:** Leinster League Wexford Area 1-6, contact Alby Allan for details albertallan@hotmail.com

● **17:** East Anglian Sea League, teams of five and open, Clacton 10-3pm, length to weigh conversion, £25 entry, juniors must be accompanied by an adult, pre-book only with Rob Tuck 07855848967

● **22:** Edinburgh New Year Shore League, Newhaven, Reg 6-6.15pm, fishing 7pm-10pm, pre-book only, contact Ian Campbell 07907805822

● **23:** Southern League round 3 of 12 & open, Cogden 5-10pm, pegged, measure & return, undersize fish count as 1oz, £15 match entry, £5 pools, £10 pair, team of five free, 2022 League entry £25, booking ends one hour before start, book only, Darren 07919 073232, Mike 07983 579596, Ian 07736 004714 or Ant 07775 691916. Nick: southernleagueandopens@gmail.com

● **23:** Yorkshire Federation of Sea Anglers, Withernsea 11-4pm, Keith Mumby 07340 758013 or via Facebook page, Yorkshire Federation of Sea Anglers. Keith: keithmumby@btinternet.com

● **24:** East Region Shore League Marcross & Monknash, Steve Chadwick 07777689289

● **24:** Holt SAC Norfolk Team Challenge Round 6, Grand Final, Bacton, Tony 07780793141, thomasamt@btinternet.com, Mike 07858758669, holtseaanglers@gmail.com

● **24:** Bognor Regis Amateur Angling Society Pagham open beach competition, fishing 8.30-1.30pm, catch and release, booking Pagham Yacht Club 07.30am, 1 West Front Road, Pagham PO21 4SY, entry £8 senior, junior £4, optional fish pools flat £1 round £1, pools highest single fish points, BRAAS reserve the right to refuse entry, contact John Small 07799762377 after 5pm

GOT AN EVENT? CONTACT IAN.BOWELL@ICLOUD.COM

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NEW DAIWA KENZAKI SURF RODS

As you would expect from Daiwa, a new rod that will take some beating at this price. They look and fish like a rod twice the price!
UK built with a choice of 2 lengths 13ft 6" cast 4-7oz and 14ft 2" cast 4-8oz both with great tips that won't bounce around in the tide but as most Daiwa have exceptional bite registration and cast great. Movable reel seats and K style guides (braid friendly) and hybrid design suitable for multi or fix spool reel.

13ft 6" only £229.99 14ft 2" only £239.99

AKIOS

THESE ARE JUST *SOME* OF THE TOP SELLERS GERRY'S CARRIES THE FULL AKIOS RANGE!

Akios Hellrazor SS420 14ft 3pc
Norm £179.99 Gerry's £149.99
1000s sold amazing value cast 4-8oz KWAG guides

+ Combo up with a **Akios Utopia CX8 reel** for combo price **£199.99 save £99.99** on retail price!

Akios Fury FX435 14ft 6"
Gerry's £159.99 or Fury FX450 15ft Gerry's £145.99
Both Fury's 3pc cast 4-8ox and are the best rods at this money on the market

+ Combo up with a **Akios Utopia CX8 reel** for combo price **£199.99 save up to £87.99** on retail price!

Akios Airpower 435 SRS Black Edition 14ft 3pc cast 4-8ox
Norm £439.99 Gerry's £389.99
Fuji KWag guides , all-round rod, fantastic glass tip for bites, movable reel seat

Akios Airpower 420GTR 14ft 2pc cast 4-8ox
Norm £449.99 Gerry's £399.99
Fuji KWag guides , all-round rod, fantastic glass tip for bites

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Fuji KWag guides , weight 485gms, J Curve action

NEW PENN TIDAL BEACH

These are nothing like the older Tidals but a completely new designed surf rod that knocks spots off anything else close to thisprice! Both 4-8oz. Use for multi or fi x spool movable reel seats, durable braid friendly saltwater resistant guides blanks in 24/30T high quality carbon, in 40+ years Gerry's think this is the best we've ever seen at

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GUY COTTEN AQUASTAR BREATHABLE TOP FISHING SMOCK & AQUASTAR BIB & BRACE

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Small to a big chested 50"+ XXXLarge (Call for Advice!)

GUY COTTEN TOP SURF SMOCK

Not the cheapest but if you want the best this is as good as it gets!
Unbelievable 25000mm, as waterproof as a pair of waders!
Great breathability 5000/m2/24h
This tough smock has front cargo pocket and side hand flap pockets
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The leisure version of the 100000s sold of yellow commercials, just tough and last for ever!
High fitting and no pockets so no leaks
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20000mm c3 100% waterproof and breathable fabric.
Neo cuffs and waist, front cargo pocket.
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Manufactured to the highest standards using a three-layer construction which consists of a 100% nylon outer, a fully waterproof and breathable membrane and a 100% polyester lining. These three layers are bonded together giving the fabric with a 15000mm hydrostatic head and a breathability rating of 5000mpv

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- Two zipped cargo pockets with storm flaps
- Two zipped hand warmer pockets with storm flaps
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- Neoprene inner cuffs with adjustable outer cuffs with Velcro fittings

NG Team Smock £149.95
- Fully tape seams to prevent leaking through any exposed seams
- Fitted 3M Scotchlite reflective patches
- Neoprene inner cuffs, elasticated waterproof outer cuffs
- Front pouch pocket with zipped access and storm flap
- Oversized fleece liner storm collar

NG Team Bib & Brace £99.95
- Two cargo pockets with Velcro fastening storm flaps
- 2 fleece lined, zipped hand warmer pockets with storm flaps
- Adjustable elasticated braces with quick release buckles.
- Reinforced seat & Knee area.
- Leg gussets with Velcro fastening adjustment straps.

Century SEA TIP TORNADO GRAPHEX FIREBLADE ELIMINATOR Excalibur

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Tip Tornado Graphex Sport 13' 11" / 125-225g	Heavy - Mixed	£685.00	£599.99
Tip Tornado Graphex Supermatch 13' 6" / 125-200g	Light Heavy - Smooth	£640.00	£559.99
Tip Tornado Graphex Match 13' 6" / 125-175g	Mixed - Smooth	£635.00	£554.99
Tip Tornado Graphex Supermatch LD 13' / 50-150g	Mixed - Smooth	£610.00	£534.99
Tip Tornado Graphex Ultralite ST 13' / 50-125g	Smooth	£585.00	£509.99
Eliminator T1200 14' 10" / 125-225g	Heavy ground	£815.00	£714.99
Eliminator T1200 Salvador Bustos Edition 14' 4" / 125-225g	Heavy ground	£815.00	£714.99
Eliminator T1000 14' 10" / 125-200g	Heavy ground	£795.00	£694.99
Eliminator T900-SGT 14' 4" / 125-200g	Heavy - Mixed	£715.00	£624.99
Eliminator T800-SGT 13' 6" / 100-175g	Mixed - Smooth	£655.00	£574.99
Eliminator T700-SGT 15' / 100-170g	Mixed - Smooth	£685.00	£599.99
Excalibur TT 14' 10" / 100-225g	Heavy ground	£795.00	£694.99
Excalibur J 13' 6" / 100-200g	Mixed ground	£615.00	£539.99
Excalibur C 13' 10" / 100-200g	Heavy - Mixed	£615.00	£539.99
Kompressor WR 300 13' 3" / 125-225g	Heavy ground	£640.00	£559.99
Kompressor SS 13' 10" / 125-200g	Heavy ground	£570.00	£499.99
Kompressor S 13' 10" / 125-200g	Heavy - Mixed	£565.00	£494.99
TTR 14' / 125-225g	Heavy ground	£770.00	£674.99
Tip Tornado Sport 13' 6" / 125-225g	Heavy - Mixed	£570.00	£499.99

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- UPGRADED Drag System
- EVA Ball Power Handle
- Superfast 6.2:1 Retrieve Ratio
- Powerful Precision Machined Bronze/Brass Gearing
- Cap 340mt x 0.35mm

PENN SPINFISHER VII LONGCASTS

IPX5 Mag sealed, longcast ali spools 5+1 b/bearings, x wrap line for great casting

4500 253yds x 12lb mono
Norm £159.99 **Gerry's £124.99**
5500LC 285yds x 12lb mono
Norm £204.99 **Gerry's £159.99**
6500LC 350yds x 15lb mono
Norm £219.99 **Gerry's £169.99**
7500LC 480yds x 20lb mono
Norm £229.99 **Gerry's £179.99**

NEW PENN TIDAL XT LONGCAST

Possibly the best casting reel, tough, 2 spools perfect for braid or mono, 9+1 sealed stainless b/bearings, slow x line oscillation for extra easy long casting! many more features!
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- Super Slow Oscillation for Exceptional Casting Performance
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Shallow spool 300mt 0.30m,Deep spool 300mt 0.35mm,Ratio 4.9:1,Mag Sealed, ZAION V Body and Rotor, SCW – Slow Cross Wrap,QD Quick Drag, AirBail & Rotor, Digigear II, amazing weight 605 gm

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Mag 525 norm £199.99 **Gerrys £139.99**

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What a reel! A Gerry's only special, we think this is the best casting reel at this money! Line Capacity 300mt-0.30mm, 2 spools! Ratio 4.9:1/*103cm,QD Quick Drag Bearings: 3+1 – DS4 composite frame and rotor –perfect x wrap line lay for long distances and braid.